UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

THE

MINING ASSOCIATION

OF

GREAT BRITAIN.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL, 1893.

(*Appointed for 2nd Reading 3rd May*, 1893.)

Summary

DIGEST OF EVIDENCE GIVEN BEFORE GROUP "A" COMMITTEE OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR IN REFERENCE TO THE ABOVE, AND PRINT OF THE BILL.

THOS. RATCLIFFE ELLIS,
LAW CLERK AND SECRETARY,
6, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

3366 8

INDEX.

PAGE

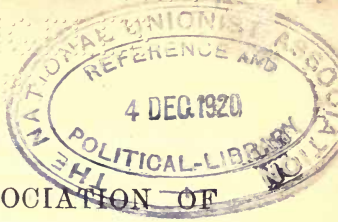
SUMMARY 1

DIGEST OF EVIDENCE GIVEN BEFORE GROUP "A" OF THE ROYAL LABOUR COMMISSION 37

EXTRACT FROM MEMORANDUM AS TO MINING AND IRON INDUSTRIES 219

REPRINT OF MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL, 1893 225

NA 42
TN
242
G7A5
1893



THE MINING ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Summary.

1887. *Coal Mine Regulatio Act Amen ment Bill*

When the Coal Mines Regulation Act Amendment (Government) Bill was before the House of Commons in the Session of 1887, Mr. Williamson moved to insert a new clause, providing that, except in cases of emergency, no workman should be employed in any mine to which the Act applied for a longer period than eight consecutive hours or for more than eight hours in any twenty-four hours, where the mine was worked on the single shift system.

This, it is believed, was the first occasion on which Parliament was definitely asked to fix the hours of male adult labour in coal mines at eight hours per day.

The clause in question was opposed by, amongst others, the then Home Secretary (Mr. Henry Matthews), Mr. Burt, Mr. Childers, Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Bradlaugh, and Mr. W. H. Smith.

Mr. Burt, in the course of the discussion, pointed out that so far as adults were concerned they could do for themselves what the amendment proposed to do for them.

Mr. Childers mentioned that about two years before he had received a deputation of miners and had put to them most carefully the question, "Do you wish any State interference with the hours of adult labour?" and the answer in

LIBRARY SETS
DEC 1 6 1940
HARDING
383618

every case was "No." He stated that he could not find that in any district it was the desire of miners that restriction upon their labour should be imposed by law.

Mr. BROADHURST opposed the clause on the ground that it proposed to do for grown men what they could do for themselves.

Mr. FENWICK, in opposing the clause, mentioned that the miners he represented had solely by the force of their organization and self-dependence been able to secure for themselves a shorter period of labour.

Mr. BRADLAUGH said he emphatically opposed the clause, contending that the miners ought to be taught to rely upon themselves and not upon the legislature.

On a division, the clause was rejected by a majority of 105 votes, the numbers being, for the clause 54, against it 159.

This debate and division took place in Committee on the Mines Bill on the 17th August, 1887.

1887. *September. Trades Union Congress at Swansea.*

In the month of September of the same year, at the Trades Union Congress held at Swansea, a resolution was proposed to the effect that the reduction of the working day, IN ALL TRADES, to eight hours, was desirable, and could be effected by combination if eight hours only were worked in Government workshops.

An amendment was moved to the effect, that this object could be better effected by law.

A further amendment was proposed to the effect, that first of all the opinion of the working classes should be obtained by a plebiscite. This further amendment was carried by 84 votes to 11.

1888. *Mines (Limitation of Hours) Bill.*

In the Session of 1888, a Mines (Limitation of Hours) Bill to "limit the hours of labour by underground workers to eight hours a day" was brought in by Mr. Cunninghame Graham, Mr. Abraham, Mr. Pickard, Mr. Conybeare, and

Mr. Cremer, and was read a first time on the 4th May. The order for second reading was, however, read and discharged, and the Bill withdrawn on the 9th July.

1888. *September. Trades Union Congress at Bradford.*

In September, 1888, at the Trades Union Congress held at Bradford, Mr. Threlfall (of Southport) moved a resolution in favour of an Eight Hours Bill for MINERS and RAILWAY WORKERS, and stated that the Mining population were overwhelmingly in favour of it. The resolution was, however, lost by one vote, 46 voting against it and 45 in its favour.

At the same Congress an amendment was moved by Mr. Keir Hardie that the Bill should apply to ALL TRADES, but was defeated by a large majority.

1889. *Mines (Eight Hours) Bill.*

In the Session of 1889 a Mines (Eight Hours) Bill was again brought in by Mr. Cunninghame Graham and other members, but it did not reach a second reading.

1889. *September. Trades Union Congress at Dundee.*

In September, 1889, at the Trades Union Congress at Dundee, a motion was made by Mr. Keir Hardie for the furtherance of legislation on the Eight Hours day, but this was defeated by 23 votes, the numbers being 65 in favour and 88 against it. A resolution in favour of an Eight Hours Bill for MINERS was, however, carried by a large majority.

1890. *Mines (Eight Hours) Bill.*

In the Session of 1890 a Bill "to restrict labour in mines to eight hours per day" was introduced by Mr. Philipps, Mr. Cunninghame Grahame, Mr. Pickard, Mr. Abraham, Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Jacoby, Mr. Randall, Sir W. Foster, and Earl Compton, and was read a first time on the 12th February. It was, however, subsequently dropped.

1890. *September. Trades Union Congress at Liverpool.*

In September, 1890, at the Trades Union Congress at Liverpool, a resolution in favour of an Eight Hours Bill FOR ALL TRADES was carried by 38 votes, the numbers being 193 in favour, and 155 against the motion.

An amendment was moved on behalf of the Durham miners, against any legislation on the subject, but this was lost by 6 votes, the numbers being 175 for and 181 against.

1890. *November. Mines (Eight Hours) Bill.*

On the 26th November, 1890, a Bill "to restrict the labour in mines to eight hours a day" was brought in by Mr. Abraham, and the members above-named, and others.

1891. *January and February. Conference in London between Coal Owners and Miners.*

On the 21st January, 1891, a Conference on the Mines Eight Hours Question took place at the Westminster Palace Hotel, between certain representative Coal-owners, and the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, the South Wales and Monmouth Miners' Federation, and Scotland.

Mr. Alfred Barnes (then M.P. for the Chesterfield division of Derbyshire) presided.

This Conference was brought about as the result of a correspondence between Mr. Pickard, M.P., and Mr. Thomas Ashton, the President and Secretary respectively of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, and Mr. Maskell Peace and Mr. F. Parker Rhodes on behalf of the Coal-owners.

Mr. PICKARD read the case on behalf of the Miners represented at the Conference in support of "An Eight Hours' day from bank to bank." The statement was as follows:—

Statement of Miners' Case.

"Gentlemen, we appear before you to-day to prefer a claim which, in our opinion, is a fair, a legitimate, and a just one, namely, to ask you to agree to a working day or shift of eight hours from bank to bank in every consecutive 24 hours day. As is well known, we are anxious to secure such a working day by legislative enactment rather than by arrangements with gentlemen engaged in the trade. That is our first way of looking at it. Our reasons are that in our opinion an eight hours' day, if so arranged, would be conducive to health, safety, and the better regulation of the internal working

of our mines. The long hours our men have to put in from the time they leave their homes to engage upon their work in any shift is, on the average, longer than in any other trade or occupation in the country. The average is from five in the morning until two or three in the afternoon, which means ten hours and a half to eleven hours actually engaged either in getting to their work, or being engaged at the coal face. This means more time put in than the staple trades of this country. Whilst these men on the surface are breathing pure air, being supplied with warm food and drinks, with their half hour to breakfast and their hour to dinner with such intervals in their toil, our miners are hurrying, as if for life or death, from home to the pit bank, and when they descend the mines the only pure air they possess during that day is what they take down with them. From the time they enter the mine they are breathing impure air, risking their lives every moment they are underground, and their toil is more dangerous and exhaustive than any other work known on the surface. It has been ascertained that the deaths among our miners, who actually work in the mines, are on the average higher than in the case of those working in other trades; that we have more disabled, permanently disabled men than any other trade, and there is not the slightest doubt that we have more killed, seriously injured and non-seriously injured, than half the trades of the country put together. It has just been ascertained that a great portion of the accidents resulting in persons killed and injured occurred during the later hours of the shift worked. From the fourth hour, and during the remaining portion of the shift—according to a return granted to Mr. Fenwick on coal

mines explosions—vast numbers of our miners have been killed during the last 10 years; conclusively proving, as we contend, that as men become mentally and physically exhausted they are not so well able to look after their own and their fellow-workmen's safety. We also ask you to concede the Eight Hours Day because the workmen will have more time for recreation and self-improvement, and be better able to perform their duties as citizens generally. We likewise believe that the work will be done more efficiently, more regularly, and with less cost and wear and tear in material, in addition to safety to life and limb. We also believe that the output will be more regular, will give the managers more confidence in the ability of the workmen to perform a fair day's work, and will bring about a better feeling between employers and employed. We have no fear that if this is conceded there will be any diminution of output. In our opinion if this shorter time is conceded, the workman will be able to leave his work with that reserve of strength which will better enable him to attend his work the following day than under the present system. In our opinion the present plan actually takes out of a man during the last three-quarters of an hour in which he is engaged at his work that vital energy which it is utterly impossible to replace, and which, persistently exercised, works down the whole system, and brings in its course unnatural decay of the system.

"In conclusion, we ask you to concede this day of eight hours in the following form, namely:—That it become a special rule in every mining inspector's district that no person shall work underground from bank to bank more than eight hours in any one day of 24 hours,

and that the same shall be mutually agreed upon and form part of the Act of 1887. Unless such is the case it will be utterly impossible for us to take it, as our great object is to secure a uniform Eight Hours Day for the underground toilers in the United Kingdom."

Mr. A. M. CHAMBERS (the then President of the Mining Association), in replying on behalf of the Coal-owners, asked that the Conference might be adjourned to enable the latter to consider the case which had been read by Mr. Pickard, and to ascertain whether the statements put forward were really verified by the facts.

It was accordingly arranged that the Conference should be adjourned for three weeks, and that in the meantime the Coal-owners should be supplied with prints of the case which had been read by Mr. Pickard. The adjourned Conference took place on the 11th February, 1891, Mr. Barnes, M.P., again presiding, when the reply of the Coal-owners to the case put forward by the Miners' Federation was read, in which the Coal-owners said that it was quite impossible to agree to the establishment of a rule making it a penal offence for any person to work more than Eight Hours in any one day, and gave the reasons for the decision at which they had arrived.

The reply of the Coal-owners, which was read by Mr. F. PARKER RHODES, was as follows:—

Reply of Coal Owners.

"Since we met you on the 21st January we have conferred with the owners in different districts with regard to your request that the owners as a body should agree to the establishment throughout the kingdom of a Special Rule under the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887, by which it shall be provided that no person shall work under ground, from bank to bank, more than 8

hours in any one day of 24 hours. You formulated your request and also the reasons which, in your judg. ment, supported it, in the statement which Mr. Pickard read, and in dealing with such an important subject that course was undoubtedly convenient. We propose to adopt the same method and to read now, and also hand to Mr. Pickard, this written statement in which we have set out the conclusions at which we have arrived, and in which we have also indicated some errors into which we think you have fallen, and some of the reasons which, to our minds, appear to negative some of your allegations. You will then have your own statement and ours together, and can consider them and judge for yourselves. In the first place, we are bound to tell you that it seems quite impossible to agree to the establishment of such a Special Rule as you ask for which would render it a penal offence under the Mines Act of 1887 for any person to work more than 8 hours in any one day, and expose both the person working and the employer permitting him to work to fine or imprisonment. We are quite sure that such a rule was never contemplated by the Legislature when that Act was passed, and that even if agreed to, it would be bad and beyond the powers conferred by that Act. But quite apart from that part of the question, we are satisfied that the adoption of your proposal would entail serious injury to the industry on which both you and ourselves are dependent, and on which we must all remember the community at large is also dependent. Of course we might take a selfish view, and say that we need not consider the rest of the community. That would, however, be a fallacy. They depend on us for fuel, but we depend on them for its consumption. We

will deal, however, for the moment with your request as it affects our trade alone. That request in form applies to the whole of the United Kingdom, but in reality it does not. On your side we see that the oldest and most important mining district in the kingdom, viz., the North of England, does not join in your demand. On our side you will see that the North of Engand, South Wales, and Scotland are not here. If therefore, your proposal was adopted in the Midland Counties, Lancashire, Cheshire, and North Wales, those districts would be heavily handicapped in competing with the North of England, South Wales, and Scotland. Already the inland coalfields compete at a disadvantage with those on the seaboard. You need only slightly increase that disadvantage to shut out the inland coalfields to a large extent from the markets on which they depend. This argument applies with equal force to competition with the Continental coalfields, and in their case it must be remembered that such competition is every year becoming more severe, and that the maintenance of our supremacy in foreign markets is essential for our existence. Apart from the foregoing weighty considerations we think there are errors in your statement that require correction. Those statements are as follows:—(1.) 'That the time put in by the miners at present is on the average from 5 in the morning until 2 or 3 in the afternoon, which means 10½ to 11 hours actually engaged in getting to their work and being engaged at the coal face. This means more time put in than in the other staple trades of this country.' This overstates the case, as from their own figures the extreme time is only 10 hours per day. In almost the whole of the staple

trades of the country the workmen are absent from their homes at least 12 hours per day, as work usually runs from 6 o'clock in the morning till 5 in the afternoon. (2.) The statement is made that 'when they descend the mines, the only pure air they possess during that day is what they take down with them,' and 'also from the time they enter the mine they are breathing impure air.' As a matter of fact, with the improved modern means of ventilation, the air in most mines is quite as pure and healthy as in most of the mills engaged in the textile trades and in the workshops of a large number of industries; such as those used in the manufacture of iron files, cutlery, clothing, boots and shoes, etc. (3.) It is stated that 'It has been ascertained that the deaths among our miners are on the average higher than in the case of those working in other trades; that we have more disabled, permanently disabled men than any other trade, and there is not the slightest doubt that we have more killed, seriously injured, and non-seriously injured than half the trade of the country put together.' This statement is an exaggeration. According to a Parliamentary return ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 15th August, 1890, the number of persons seriously injured amongst railway servants is considerably larger in proportion to the number employed than the number seriously injured in collieries. The following table, extracted from that return shows this to be the case:—

	Total Number employed.	Deaths per 10,000.	Injured per 10,000.
Coal Mines	581,809	19·1	73·6
Railway Servants ..	381,626	11·8	272·2

With regard to the average death rate among the mining population, the following statement shows that it is only slightly in excess of other occupations. These figures are taken from the supplement to the 45th Annual Report of the Registrar-General.

TABLE 6. — MEAN ANNUAL MORTALITY AT SUCCESSIVE PERIODS OF LIFE OF MALES ENGAGED IN VARIOUS OCCUPATIONS.

	AGES.				
	15	20	25	45	65 and upwards.
All males, mortality per 1,000 . . .	4·57	6·04	10·16	25·27	92·65
Occupied males . .	2·95	5·60	9·71	24·63	88·71
Coal mines, mean .	4·68	6·18	7·64	25·11	117·70

TABLE L.—COMPARATIVE MORTALITY OF MALES 25—65 YEARS OF AGE.

	Nervous diseases.	Suicide.	Diseases of Circulatory system.	Phthisis.	Diseases Respiratory system.	Urinary.	Liver.	Digestive.	Alcoholism.	Gout.	Plumbism.
All males, England and Wales . .	119	14	120	220	182	41	39	38	10	3	1
Mines (mean) .	72	3	95	126	202.	27	22	32	3	...	...

	Accidents.	All other causes.	Total.
General	67	146	1,000
Mines	186	115	883

Extract from letter of Dr. Ogle, page xlix. :—

"'COAL MINERS.—The death rates of coal miners are surprisingly low. In spite of their terrible liability to accident, and their constant exposure to an atmosphere vitiated by coal dust, by foul air and by an excessively high temperature the comparative mortality of their labourers is considerably below that of all males.' (Again) 'The mortality of the miners from all other causes (than accidents) is below that of the general male population.' (Again), 'if we exclude these accidents it will be found that the mortality of the coal miners only slightly exceeds that of the most healthy class of men in our table, viz., the agriculturists; that is to say the farmers, the agricultural labourers, and the gardeners.'

"With regard to the premiums for life assurance charged by the Industrial Life Assurance Company, the Prudential, Refuge, and London Edinburgh and Glasgow Companies make no higher charges for miners and railway men than for the other working classes. One company only (so far as has been ascertained), namely, the Scottish Temperance Insurance Company, make an extra charge on the lives of miners and railway men, but the extra amount of that charge is only 1 per cent.

(4.) "The next statement is that 'It has been ascertained that a great proportion of the accidents resulting

in persons killed and injured occurred during the later hours of the shift work.' The return relied on to prove this is one that was granted on the motion of Mr. Fenwick, M.P., showing the number for the last ten years of the fatal explosions which were notified to the Inspectors of Mines, and the number of lives lost, and the approximate hour of the shift when the explosion occurred. This return, however, shows rather the following contrary results:

COAL MINES, FATAL EXPLOSIONS DURING LAST TEN YEARS SHOWING THE HOUR OF SHIFT IN WHICH THEY HAVE OCCURRED.

1st.	2nd.	3rd.	4th.	5th.	6th.	7th.	8th.	9th.	10th.	...	15th.
48	22	29	26	24	17	11	16	10	1	...	1

Total first four hours, 125. Total after fourth hour, 80.

COAL MINES EXPLOSIONS (FATAL) DURING TEN YEARS NUMBER OF DEATHS IN EACH. HOUR OF EMPLOYMENT.

1st.	2nd.	3rd.	4th.	5th.	6th.	7th.	8th.	9th	10th.	11th.	...	15th.
136	317	278	481	333	69	182	60	95	2	...	...	3

Total first four hours, 1,202. Total after fourth hour, 744.

"It should be noted that this return refers only to explosions, the causes of the greatest number of accidents in mines are, however, falls of roof and side. We have at present no statistics to shew what proportion of these accidents occur during the earlier hours of the shift, but the general experience of mining engineers is, and the contention of the men themselves when the last

Mines Act was passed, was that a larger proportion occurs during the first two or three hours of the shift, and this was naturally explained by the men's representatives on that occasion by the fact that during the time in which the working places are not occupied, the gradual weight which is always at work has loosened both roof and sides, and rendered the place in the first hours of the shift more liable to such accidents. (5.) A further statement is, 'We have no fear that if this is conceded there will be any diminution of the output.' It is impossible to understand upon what ground this statement rests. The usual practice in the Midland Counties, Lancashire and Cheshire, and North and South Wales is to work a single shift. It is also the custom to wind coals from 8 to 10 hours. If every person employed underground is to be drawn out within 8 hours of the time he goes down, it is manifest that coal winding cannot be carried on for more than 6½ to 7 hours, and in many instances even less than that, as at nearly all the large pits it occupies from one hour to two to lower and raise the men employed. According to the present special rules, in winding men the engines have to run slower than when winding coal. This proposal if acceded to might lead to winding the men out at a quicker rate, and increase the danger of this operation. The result of a 6½ to 7 hours winding day would be to reduce the output of coal from 20 to 25 per cent., and as a very large number of all persons employed underground are paid by the piece, this would very largely reduce the aggregate wages fund, and, consequently every pieceman would suffer in proportion. Another very serious result would be a large increase in the cost of production. This lessened pro-

duction and increased cost would lead to a very considerable advance in the prices of fuel of all descriptions. This would bear very hardly upon the whole of the industries of the country dependent upon the supplies of fuel. At the present time the iron trade is in a state of depression; many firms owning blast furnaces and rolling mills find it impossible to carry on their concerns at a reasonable profit even at the present prices. Any considerable increase of prices would inevitably lead to a complete stagnation of the iron trade, and many other industries connected with it. Blast furnaces would be blown out; rolling mills would be stopped; shipbuilding works and engineering works would be unable to carry on their operations; and the result would be an enormous diminution in the demand for coal, a fall of prices, and a serious struggle between coal-owners and miners for a reduction of wages, and a return to reasonable hours of working. (6.) The exact form in which this day of eight hours is demanded is as follows: 'That it become a special rule in every mining inspector's district that no person shall work underground from bank to bank more than eight hours in any one day of 24 hours, and that the same shall be mutually agreed upon, and form part of the Act of 1887.' As we have already stated, such a course as the one proposed, in our judgment, cannot legally be carried out, and it raises the large question as to whether Parliament should fix the hours of adult labour. If Parliament is to be asked to do this, why should it not also fix the rate of wages and the rate of profits to be earned in this industry. There are about 600,000 miners employed in this country, representing about 3,000,000 of the population, out of a

total population of 38,000,000 who are all more or less consumers of coal. If the result of any Parliamentary enactment should lead to a considerable increase in the price of coal, it is perfectly certain that the great bulk of the consumers will raise their voice with respect to it, and insist upon its being supplied at a reasonable price. In conclusion, we wish to make it clear that if the working hours in different districts do interfere with the health of those concerned, that all of us would desire to find a remedy. It seems to us that it would be easy to ascertain beyond doubt what the facts are, so far as they are in dispute between us, and we should be quite willing (either by means of a Joint Committee, or, still better, by means of a Royal Commission, if one could be obtained), to ascertain the real facts and circumstances, and endeavour in conjunction with you to find a solution for any proved and ascertained grievance."

1891. *March. Second reading of Mines' (Eight Hours) Bill moved— Bill dropped.*

The Bill last referred to, which had been introduced and read a first time on the 26th November, 1890, was appointed for second reading on the 18th March, 1891, on which date Mr. Abraham, in moving the second reading, said that it would be a great disappointment to many members of the House and to the labouring population of the country that there was no time for the discussion of the Bill. He therefore moved the second reading, and Mr. Pickard moved the adjournment of the debate. The Bill was subsequently dropped.

1891. *September. Trades Union Congress at Newcastle.*

At the Trades Union Congress, held at Newcastle in September, 1891, a resolution in favour of an International Conference to promote legislation for an Eight Hours day was carried by 69 votes, the numbers being, for the resolution 232, against it 163.

An amendment was proposed that no Bill should be passed applying to all trades. This was proposed by a representative of the Northumberland Miners, but the amendment was lost by 166 votes, the numbers being 136 in support of it and 302 against it.

A second amendment was proposed to the effect that any Bill passed should require a majority of two-thirds in a trade before an Eight Hours measure could be enforced, and this amendment was carried by 86 votes, 242 voting in favour of it and 156 against it.

A further amendment was proposed to the effect that an Eight Hours day should be enforced by law in all trades where a majority wanted it, and this was carried by 102 votes, 285 voting for it and 183 against it, and on being put as a substantive resolution it was carried by 268 votes, the voting being, for the resolution, 341; against it, 73.

A resolution was also proposed, on behalf of the Miners Federation, for an Eight Hours Bill FOR MINERS. An amendment to this was moved on behalf of the Durham and Northumberland miners, against Parliamentary interference, but the amendment of the latter was lost by a large majority, 59 only voting for it, and 237 against it. The resolution was carried by 290 against 50.

1892.

Mines (Eight Hours) Bill.

The Bill introduced into Parliament in the Session of 1892 was similar to the Bills on the same subject introduced in previous Sessions. It was backed by Mr. Leake, Mr. W. Abraham (Glamorgan), Mr. Pickard, Mr. Randell, Mr Philipps, Mr. Roby, Mr. Jacoby, Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Spencer Balfour, Mr. Arthur Acland, Mr. Philip Stanhope, Earl Compton, and Sir Walter Foster.

Debate on motion for Second Reading.

It was appointed for second reading on the 23rd March, 1892, and occupied the whole of the sitting on that day.

Mr. Leake, in moving the second reading of the Bill,

mentioned that from the last returns on the subject, it appeared that the number of underground workers was 531,000, of whom 506,000 worked in coal-mines. He stated that with the exception of the important districts of Northumberland and Durham, the miners of Great Britain were practically unanimous in their support of the measure. He admitted that it was only within the last few years that they had become so unanimous; that in 1889 at a Conference in Birmingham they had come to a decision to support an amendment in favour of the Bill. He argued the miners claim to the Bill on the following grounds: (1) the largeness of the number of people employed; (2) the peculiarity of their toil; (3) the dangers of their calling; and (4) that Eight Hours work was quite as much as an average man could yield. He pointed out that all the restrictions on the free use of labour which had been imposed by the Coal Mines Regulation Act had proved to be beneficial, and he stated that he thought that as between the miners and the mine-owners any friction which the proposed legislation might create would soon pass away. As far as the case of coal was concerned he did not think that that depended upon the hours of work. That the output depended not upon the number of hours that the men were at work, but upon the amount of work they did during those hours.

Mr. BURT, in opposing the second reading of the Bill, did not dispute the statement that eight hours' work underground was long enough for anybody. He had always advocated the shortening of working hours for all classes of workmen, and he believed that in connection with many employments the hours might be very considerably shortened with advantage, not only to the workmen, but also to the employers. He held, however, that the best way to shorten the hours of labour was by mutual agreement, if possible,

between employers and workmen. Not only could that be done with less friction, but it was more likely to be carried out effectively. He would not hesitate to go further, and say that, where workmen had thought out the subject for themselves, and where by the power of their Unions they could obtain moderate hours of labour, it could be better done than by laying down a hard and fast line, and enforcing it by penalties. He believed that they could not be made unanimous as to hours by Act of Parliament. He pointed out that the Bill was not a permissive Bill, but would impose an arbitrary rule upon workmen, irrespective of their own wishes and interests. He questioned the statement that the opinion of the Miners on the subject (with the exception of those of Northumberland and Durham) was unanimous, and he pointed out that in England the only representative men closely associated with large bodies of miners, in an official or other capacity, who had come before the Royal Labour Commission to give evidence, had opposed the Bill, and stated that in their particular districts it would be impracticable. He mentioned the fact that votes had been taken from time to time on the subject, and that only a few months before a vote was taken of the members of the Miners' Union in the usual way, when, out of 11,307, there were 2,587 for the Eight Hours Bill, and 8,720 against it While he appreciated the energy and determination of those who were in favour of the Bill, he did not hesitate to say that, if one-half of that energy and determination had been directed to the accomplishment of their object by voluntary effort, a great deal more would have been accomplished. He further pointed out that in other countries, where the hours of labour of adult men had been fixed by statute, the law had remained a dead letter. That it was only in Australia that Eight Hours had been successfully carried out, and

there the result had been attained, not by legislation, but by voluntary effort, and all that the Government did was to give the sanction of law to what had already been agreed upon and carried out, and even there it was NOT Eight Hours from BANK to BANK, but it was Eight Hours from leaving the surface until the day's work was completed in the workings. He concluded by pointing out that the proposal of the Bill was not only to confer a benefit, but to force what was deemed a benefit on the miners of the North; he, however, believed that the change was almost impracticable, and that it would expose them to loss, suffering, and misery on all hands.

Mr. HOWARTH, in seconding the amendment, stated that it was impossible to treat the question as a purely miners question, that the industry that produced coal could not be throttled without throttling their own industry also, and argued that the ultimate effect of the proposed legislation would be either to limit the out-put or to put up the price of coal, or otherwise to affect its production, which must necessarily affect every other industry. He believed that it was incontrovertible that the hours of labour could not be interfered with without at the same time affecting wages.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN, who supported the motion for second reading, urged that the effect of passing an Eight Hours Bill for miners would not necessarily be to decrease the out-put of coal. He thought that long hours meant listless, inefficient, and even bad work, and if there was a maximum which could not be exceeded with any efficiency in the labour, there might be a minimum which could not be exceeded without increasing the cost of production. The question was, had that minimum been reached. He stated that he believed the great majority of the Miners were in favour of the Bill. His argument in favour of State interference to

further an Eight Hours Day was that it was the simplest, the easiest, the quickest, and the least irritating way of settling the question. Whilst admitting that the same thing might be obtained by the men's organisations, he held that if obtained in that way it would lead to strikes and industrial warfare, and would injure both the miners, the employers, and the trade generally, but he intimated that whilst he supported the second reading as an admission of the principle, he would feel himself at liberty to criticise the details of the Bill in Committee, and perhaps to alter it materially in the way of giving greater elasticity to its provisions.

Sir FREDERICK MILNER opposed the Bill, and argued that reforms such as were proposed could only be brought about by those who had practical knowledge of the conditions of the work in the various districts, and an Act of Parliament could not be made sufficiently elastic. He mentioned the fact that in the United States, where eight and ten hours were enacted by law, the men worked as many hours as they liked themselves, and the law was utterly inoperative. He thought further that the difference of hours was not so great that it could not be settled in friendly discussion. He held that the difference in the circumstances of various mines, and the mode of working them, would render any hard and fast limitation of time absolutely an impossibility, and further, that if the hours were restricted to eight from bank to bank the danger to a miner's life would be considerably increased. In a great many pits the machinery was stopped for half an hour in the day, and this half hour was taken advantage of to examine the machinery, ropes, etc., in order to see whether they were in a proper condition. If the Bill were passed, one of the results would be that the machinery would be kept working without intermission, and there would be no time to examine it. The miner, too,

would be anxious to get out as much coal as possible in the time allowed him, and would be less careful than he would be under existing circumstances to keep his roof in good condition, and there would therefore be more accidents from falls of roof.

Mr. FENWICK also opposed the Bill, and said that large bodies of men having given the question the fullest and most careful consideration, had come to the conclusion that there was no practical way out of the difficulty by means of legislation, except by inflicting much greater hardships than those which they sought to correct. He maintained that the proposed limitation of the hours would greatly reduce the production, and that consequently the cost of production would be proportionately increased. He stated that the workmen whose confidence he enjoyed believed that what injured their employers would affect their own social and material interests; they believed their position would be worse under the Bill than it was then, and therefore he opposed the second reading.

Division.

The HOME SECRETARY, SIR JOSEPH PEASE, and Mr. MUNDELLA also opposed the Bill, and ultimately on a division there voted for the second reading, 160; against it, 272; majority against, 112.

1892.

May 11th. Deputation to Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour.

On the 11th May, 1892, a deputation from the London Trades Council waited upon the Marquis of Salisbury (Prime Minister) and Mr. A. J. Balfour (First Lord of the Treasury) in support of a legislative eight hours day IN ALL TRADES, except in special cases where exemption was asked for.

Lord SALISBURY pointed out that whilst there was a strong conviction of a general desire for an eight hours day on the part of the workmen of the country, the conviction was by no means so strong that they were unanimous in desiring that it should be done by Parliament. The deputation, he

pointed out, seemed to think that those who were asking for an eight hours day could get as much wages as they now got for working more hours, and asked what possible ground they had for saying it. If for eight hours' work the same amount of wages was paid as for ten, to that extent the price of the goods they had to sell would be increased, the number of consumers would be diminished, and consequently it would diminish the employment of workmen in the production of the industries of the country; and he expressed a fear that if the hours were reduced by legislative enactment, the result would be to drive capital out of the country.

Mr. BALFOUR, in the course of his reply, pointed out that the result of insisting—whether a seam of coal be a thick seam or a thin seam—a deep seam, worked with difficulty, or a seam near the surface, worked with facility—that in every case every seam should be worked under precisely the same conditions, would be to drive out of the market, and to drive out of employment, those workmen whose lot had been cast in parts of the country where their particular industry was carried on under less favourable conditions.

1892. *June 16th. Deputation to Mr. Gladstone.*

The Deputation from the London Trades' Council waited upon Mr. Gladstone, at Carlton Gardens, on the 16th June 1892, when the same grounds were urged in support of an Eight Hours day as at the interview with Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour. The proceedings at this interview are reported in the *Times* of the 17th June, 1892. Mr. Gladstone did not appear to favour the proposal with the information on the subject then in his possession.

1892 *September. Trades Union Congress at Glasgow.*

At the Trades' Union Congress held at Glasgow in September, 1892, the President (Mr. Hodge, of Glasgow) in the course of his address, said, in reference to the Eight Hours Day, that the dividing line which separated Trades' Unionists was as to how the Eight Hours

Day was to be attained, whether by legal enactment or trade union effort. He said that in the controversy that raged on the question, those in favour of gaining it by legislative enactment subordinated all other reforms to this. As a matter of fact, the gaining of an Eight Hours Day, no matter by which of the modes it might be gained, was but the fringe of the labour problem, and was but a small part of the question either from an economic point or in its general aspect as a solution of the labour problem. A general Eight Hour Day would do very little towards equalising the products of labour. The cause of labour would, however, be materially advanced if the energy then being devoted to the advancement of a legal Eight Hour Day was diverted in the direction of better organization and the advancement of the many local movements which had a direct bearing on the labour cause. The question, he added, was in an embryo state. It required elucidation. Personally, he was in favour of gaining it by legal enactment, but he was not prepared to force it on trades who, by argument, founded on lifelong knowledge and study of their particular industry, declared it unworkable.

Mr. S. Woods, M.P., took exception to the foregoing, and moved a resolution condemning the action of the Parliamentary Secretary, Mr. Fenwick, M.P., in having spoken and voted against the second reading of the Mines Eight Hours Bill on the 23rd March. A very long discussion ensued occupying the whole of the morning sitting, after which the Congress divided, and there voted, for the resolution 121—against it 289—majority against, 168. Subsequently, after a protracted debate, a resolution to the following effect was declared by the Chairman to have been almost unanimously carried:—

"That it be an instruction to the Parliamentary

Committee to assist and support the miners in their endeavours to get the Miners' Eight Hours Bill passed into law."

There does not appear to have been a division.

1893. *January. Miners' Conference at Birmingham.*

At a national Conference of miners held at Birmingham, on the 9th January, 1893, at which 64 delegates were present, representing 269,100 miners an amendment was moved on behalf of the Durham representatives to the effect that the Eight Hours should be secured by trades union effort and not by legislation, but this amendment only received the support of the mover and seconder.

Conference at Merthyr.

An important Conference was held at Merthyr on the 28th January, 1893, between certain representatives of the Coal-owners and the Miners' representatives, on the question of the Eight Hours bank to bank Bill, and the Chairman at that Conference (Mr. Henry Davies, Aberaman), stated his opinion that most of the workmen in South Wales were gradually coming to adopt the views of the districts represented at that Conference, namely, that there should be Eight Hours' ACTUAL WORK, and not Eight Hours from bank to bank, per day.

The Vice-Chairman stated that he would like to see a resolution in favour of NINE Hours bank to bank, so as to give them Eight Hours for work and one hour for going to and from work. After a lengthy discussion it was resolved by a vote of 69 to 20:

> "That we confirm the resolution that was passed in this district some years ago to support the Eight Hours working day, and not Eight Hours work from bank to bank."

A deputation was appointed to attend on the Prime Minister or the Home Secretary to represent the views of

the Merthyr, Aberdare and Dowlais Miners on the question.

The foregoing briefly shows the progress and position of the movement as regards the Eight Hours Bill for Miners, up to the present time.

Appendix. In the appendix (A) will be found a digest of the evidence given upon this subject before Group A of the Royal Labour Commission.

When the Royal Commission was appointed, the Miners' Federation of Great Britain declined the invitation of the Commission to offer any evidence before them, but as far as is known no reason was stated for their refusal.

It will be seen from the digest that the evidence both of employers and employed is almost unanimously opposed to any interference by Parliament with the hours of adult labour in coal-mines, and very cogent reasons are given in support of the views put forward by the various witnesses on the subject.

1893. *Mines (Eight Hours) Bill.* The Bill has been re-introduced in the present Session. It is backed by Mr. Storey, Mr. Pickard, Mr. Woods, Mr. Leake, Mr. Jacoby, Mr. Abraham, Lord Randolph Churchill, Mr. Cremer, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Phillips, Mr. Randell Mr. Conybeare, and Sir Albert Rollit.

A reprint of the Bill is contained in Appendix B. It is appointed for second reading on Wednesday, May the 3rd.

Conclusion. In great changes, such as the Mines Eight Hours Bill, if passed into law, would effect, the obligation lies upon its promoters to shew that such an alteration in the law is necessary—necessary both in the interests of those who are directly affected by it, and of the general community, who must be indirectly affected by it.

The principal arguments in favour of the Bill would appear to be as follows :—

(1) That there is a great majority of the Miners in favour of it.

(2) That the unhealthy and dangerous character of the employment in mines justifies it.

(3) That the result would not be to diminish the output, or to increase the cost of production.

With reference to the first of these, namely, that a great majority of the Miners are in favour of it, which appears to have been assumed both by Mr. Leake and Mr. Chamberlain in the debate on the motion for second reading of the Bill, already referred to, Mr. W. ABRAHAM, Member for the Rhondda Valley, stated in his speech in the same debate that there were 700,000 men working in the mines of Great Britain.

Now the National Conference held in Birmingham, in January of the present year, which has been already referred to, and which is the latest and most numerously attended meeting of Miners, was a special Conference to which had been invited representatives from all the mining districts in England, Scotland, and Wales. At that Conference there were 268,100 miners represented. Included in that number about 50,000 would be Durham miners, and the opinion expressed at that Conference in favour of a Mines Eight Hours Bill was therefore the opinion of 268,100, less 50,000, as represented by the Durham delegates, or in other words the expression of opinion of 218,100 persons. Remembering that this was a Conference to which representatives had been invited from all the mining districts (as per the report in the *Birmingham Daily Post* of the 10th January, 1893), to consider this question of an Eight Hours Day the result would appear to be that the representatives of 218,100 Miners expressed themselves in favour of the Bill,

leaving 481,900 of the 700,000 (the number fixed by Mr. Abraham, M.P., as the number of persons who were affected by it), who were either distinctly opposed to such a measure, or who had given no expression of opinion on the subject.

In the face of these figures it cannot be said—and that seems to have been the strong point urged in favour of passing the Bill—that the majority of the persons to be affected by it are in favour of the Bill.

It must also be remembered that the evidence which was given before the Royal Labour Commission (Group A) was distinctly opposed to such a measure, and it is unfortunate that the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, of which Mr. Pickard, M.P., is the President, did not accept the invitation given them to express their views before the Commission, as they would then have had an opportunity of shewing, if such is the fact, that there is this preponderance of opinion in favour of the measure which appears to have been assumed by its advocates.

With reference to the arguments that the dangerous character of the employment justifies such a Bill, this has been put upon two grounds: (1) that Mining is an unhealthy employment; and, secondly, that it is an occupation attended with great danger, and that accidents are generally found to happen towards the latter part of the working day. From the last named it is sought to be inferred that the accidents were the result of too long a period of employment.

With reference to the statement as to the unhealthy character of the occupation, this would seem to be disposed of by the report of Dr. Ogle, mentioned in the reply of the Mine Owners to the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, at the adjourned Conference, on the 11th February, 1891,

which has already been referred to. Dr. Ogle there says :—

> " The mortality of the Miners from all other causes (than accidents) is below that of the general male population. . . . . If we exclude these accidents it will be found that the mortality of the Coal Miners only slightly exceeds that of the most healthy class of men in our table, viz., the agriculturalists, that is to say the farmers, the agricultural labourers, and the gardeners."

With reference to the other statement that the greater number of accidents happen during the last hours of the shift statistics again do not bear this out.

The return which was granted by the House of Commons to Mr. Fenwick, M.P., with reference to explosions in coal-mines, shows that during the ten years prior to the publication of the return in question, in the first four hours of the shift the total number of fatal accidents was 125, and that after the fourth hour the total number was 80.

This return applies only to explosions, and there are no statistics to show what proportion of the accidents, such as arise from falls of roof and sides, occurred during the earlier hours of the shift; but the general experience of Mining Engineers is, and the contention of the men themselves, when the last Mines Act was before Parliament in 1887, was, that a large proportion of such accidents occurred during the first two or three hours of the shift, and this was naturally explained by the men's representatives on that occasion, by the fact that during the time that the working places are not occupied, the gradual weight, which is always at work, by the operation of nature, has loosened both roof and sides

and rendered the place in the first hours of the shift more liable to such accidents.

There is no lack of evidence, however, that a reduction of the hours of labour, as proposed, would not conduce to the safety of the miners, and that for two reasons; in the first place, as pointed out by Sir Frederick Milner, in the debate on the second reading of the Bill, before referred to, if the hours were altered as proposed, the machinery would have to be kept working without intermission during the whole period of the employment, whereas at present the stoppage for half-an-hour in the day is taken advantage of to examine the machinery and the ropes, etc., in order to see that they are in proper working condition.

Secondly, so far as the Miner himself is concerned, in addition to getting his coal, he has imposed upon him certain duties necessary for his own safety, and the safety of those who are working with him, by seeing that the roof and sides of his working place are kept in good condition, and if the time during which he can be in his own working place is to be limited in the way proposed, he would naturally be anxious to get as much coal as possible in the time allowed him, and would have less time at his disposal to enable him to take those necessary precautions for safety. This danger would be increased when the state of trade made it impossible for the pits to be worked for more than two or three days a week. In such a state of things, by no means improbable, he might not be able, even by devoting the whole of his available time to the getting of coal, to secure for himself sufficient wages upon which he and his family could live, much less would he be able or inclined to devote any part of that period to the examination of his working place or to the work necessary for securing safety.

The above affects the Miners themselves.

The third point affects not only employers and employed, but the community generally. It would appear to be beyond question that the result of a such a Bill would be to lessen the out-put, and, either to reduce the wages of the men, or to increase the cost of production. The representatives of the men who gave evidence before the Royal Labour Commission were obliged to admit this, and it will be found on reference to the Digest of Evidence that this was, in fact, generally admitted.

If the cost of production is in this way artificially increased, the result must be to impose upon many other industries which are large consumers of coal an additional burden which they would not be able to bear. Coal is an article of first necessity, and the various industries of the country using steam power are dependent upon receiving a constant supply. To use the words of Mr. Howarth, in the debate before referred to, "the question cannot be treated as purely a miners' question; the industry that produces coal cannot be throttled without throttling their own industries also."

Such a result would also seriously prejudice both the miners and their employers.

As Lord Salisbury pointed out, at the interview before referred to, if the price of the goods they had to sell was increased, the number of consumers would be diminished, and consequently they would diminish the employment of workmen in the production of the industries of the country.

There are other reasons why this Bill should not be allowed to pass into law. Coal mines differ in one important respect from the great majority of industries—indeed from all other employments. In coal mining a man does not

begin his work when he arrives at the pit bank. The miner or coal hewer is paid according to the quantity of coal he gets, and his work consequently does not begin until he is in his working place in the mine.

In a factory or workshop the workman can begin his work as soon as the gates are opened to him, and can continue at his work until the actual closing time.

In all cases in which Parliament has hitherto regulated the hours of labour the regulations have applied to the hours of actual labour, and there has never been any attempt made to interfere with the time during which workmen are proceeding to or returning from their employment. In the case of a miner he is not paid for the time occupied in going to and returning from his work. His remuneration depends upon the quantity of coal he gets.

It is estimated by some that, taking the whole mining industry of the kingdom, the average time occupied by miners in going to their working places from the pit bank and returning thereto is one hour per day, and it would seem to be a departure from all Parliamentary precedent to attempt to regulate the hours of work upon any other principle than shall affect the time that the miner is actually at work.

The effect of passing such a Bill as is proposed, to limit the hours of miners from bank to bank, would mean, in practice, that the actual available working hours would be limited beyond what it is believed is intended even by the advocates of the Bill. As a matter of fact the average time of a miner in his working place, if such an Act were passed, could not exceed six hours per day.

The proposal is that a man who leaves the pit bank at six o'clock in the morning must be back on the pit bank again not later than two o'clock in the afternoon.

In many collieries there are hundreds of men who have to be lowered down the shafts in the morning and wound up again in the afternoon, and it will be seen at once that a practical difficulty arises as to how the provisions of such an Act of Parliament are to be carried out except by altering the hours of winding and limiting them to eight per day. A number of men are waiting on the pit bank to take their turn to enter the cage to be lowered into the mine, and when they have finished their work they are again crowding at the bottom of the pit waiting their turn to enter the cage to be drawn out to the surface, and unless they are to be marshalled in numerical order, and, so to speak, ticketed with the time at which each man descended the pit, it will be impossible that each individual man shall be back again on the pit bank within the eight hours. The only way in which such an Act of Parliament could be carried out would be that, as already mentioned, the pit should only be winding for eight hours. If a man had to be got into and out of the pit in the time named, it is clear that the time which would be available for him to get his living by getting coal would be reduced to a point which it is impossible to fix with any accuracy, but, as already named, taking the average, the actual working hours would not exceed six hours per day.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, in his reply to the London Trades Council referred to above, pointed out how difficult, if not impossible, it would be to lay down a hard and fast line in the case of Mines where in each district and almost at every pit the work is carried on under varying and dissimilar physical and other conditions.

In some pits a Miner may be working in a seam and in a place where he would be able in a much shorter period to get as much coal as another man working in a less advanta-

geous place would be able to get in a much longer period.

In one case the distance from the bottom of the shaft to the working place might be much greater than another—again the capacity of Miners for work differs considerably. A young man would probably be able to do much more work than an older man in the same period, as the work of coal getting depends more on the strength of the worker than on his skill, and a young man, who had no responsibilities beyond himself, might be content with a less return for his labour than an older man who had to keep a house open and maintain a wife and family. Still, notwithstanding this, it is proposed to apply to all these varying conditions and circumstances the same hard and unalterable rule.

The impossibility of doing so with any satisfactory result would appear to be manifest, and it all points to the soundness of Mr. BURT'S view upon the matter, viz., that the hours of labour of adult males should be left to arrangement between employers and employed, and should not be sought to be enforced by a hard and fast Parliamentary enactment.

Such a restriction on the working hours would absolutely prevent a man from making up deficiencies in his earnings when trade was not brisk, at any other time, and this would be a result which would tell very hardly upon the Miner, more particularly upon the man who had a family to maintain.

The interest of one class of employes in and about mines, namely:—those who are known as daywagemen, seem to have been entirely disregarded by the advocates of the proposed restriction of hours. The miners or hewers are not by any means the only people engaged in and about a mine. On the surface there are the enginemen, banksmen and the

like, and below ground there are the men who are employed in keeping the roads in order, and in doing a variety of work. These men are paid so much per day, and not as the colliers are, by the amount of work they do. The daywagemen now work about 54 hours per week. If the hours during which the pit winds are to be reduced, the working hours of the daywagemen must necessarily also be reduced and very considerably reduced. It can scarcely be expected that the employers will consent to pay the same amount of wages for the reduced period of labour, and the passing of an Eight Hours Bill for underground workers would unquestionably result in a reduction of the wages of the daywagemen by a considerable amount.

The proposed Bill enacts penalties for contravention of its provisions, and provides that the penalties shall be imposed on the employer. If any such Bill is to become law, it should be provided that the person who is guilty of the contravention should be the person to be subject to the penalty, and that person would be the workman, and not the employer who would have no means at his disposal for preventing a man continuing his work at the face beyond the time limited, and it would be altogether unreasonable that he should be subjected to penalties for offences which he has not committed, and which he could not prevent.

THOS. RATCLIFFE ELLIS,

Law Clerk and Secretary.

6, Strand, London, W.C.,

16*th February*, 1893.

NATIONAL UNIONIST ASSOCIATION
REFERENCE AND
4 DEC 1920
POLITICAL LIBRARY

INDEX.

	PAGE
Mr. William Hammond Patterson	37
Mr. John Wilson, M.P.	38
Mr. Joseph Toyn	40
Mr. John Norman	42
Mr. Jabez Strong	43
Mr. Frank Stobart	45
Mr. Ralph Young	47
Mr. William Henry Lambton ..	55
Mr. John George Weeks	60
Mr. Robert Ornston Lamb ...	65
Mr. George Jaques	69
Mr. John Weir	82
Mr. David Morgan	92
Mr. Isaac Evans	98
Mr. Alfred Onions	101
Mr. William Evans...	106
Mr. Langford Ridsdale	107
Mr. George Caldwell	108
Mr. George Watson Macalpine ...	111
Mr. Arthur Sopwith	115
Mr. William Fairley	119
Mr. John Puxley White	123

	P
Mr. Frederick Channer Corfield	
Mr. Frederick Parker Rhodes ...	
Mr. Arthur Marshall Chambers	
Mr. William Kerry	
Mr. John Bennett	
Mr. Benjamin Morris	
Mr. Robert Smellie	
Mr. William Small...	
Col. Joseph Bramah Cochrane ...	
Mr. Jacob Ray	
Mr. Griffith Thomas	
Mr. Howell John	
Mr. David Evan Davies	
Mr. Edward Jones	
Mr. William Thomas	
Mr. William Jenkins	
Mr. George William Wilkinson ...	
Mr. Thomas Gray	
Mr. J. Keir Hardie	
Mr. Robert Baird	
Mr. Andrew Kirkwood McCosh ...	
Mr. John Connel	

APPENDIX A.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL, 1892.

(Appointed for 2nd Reading 23rd March, 1892.)

DIGEST OF THE EVIDENCE.

(Reprinted from the published Official Report.)

GIVEN BEFORE GROUP "A" OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR, IN REFERENCE TO THE RESTRICTION OF THE PERIOD OF EMPLOYMENT OF ALL UNDERGROUND WORKMEN TO EIGHT HOURS FROM BANK TO BANK, AS PROPOSED BY THE ABOVE BILL.

Mr. WILLIAM HAMMOND PATTERSON, Secretary of the Durham Miners' Association (8th July, 1891), stated as follows:—

(27.)* The fixed hours (hewers in the County of Durham) are seven from bank to bank.

(30.) The stone men and shifters work eight hours from bank to bank. The onsetters and other men directly engaged in the output of the coal work 10½ hours; the boys work 10 hours from bank to bank.

The question of eight hours from bank to bank has been before the men two or three times, and always been decided by an overwhelming majority against it.

* *The figures in brackets are the numbers of the questions in the Official Report.*

383618

(109.) A single shift of eight hours would increase at least every hewer an hour and a half a day. As soon as they got the eight hours they would want in the County of Durham two shifts of men.

(110.) If it was a single shift of eight hours it would mean an hour and a half a day entra.

(267.) I believe that the hours of men would be better adjusted by themselves and their organisation than they would be by any Acts of Parliament, if such were passed.

Mr. JOHN WILSON, M.P.

(624.) The pits run 10 hours a day with the exception of Saturdays.

(625.) Prior to 20 years ago, 21 years ago, men were hewing coals in many parts of the county of Durham, 10 hours a day, but when the Mines Regulation Act came into operation we availed ourselves of the opportunity to shorten the hours, and with the concurrence of the owners, we arranged it mutually. Last year, (and here I would like you to see the magnitude of the thing) we took an hour a day off, I should think, 130 or 140 collieries; we reduced them from 11 hours to 10, and the actual hewers' hours were reduced to a maximum of seven hours per day from bank to bank. But at those pits where there are seven hours a day from bank to bank some of the coal hewers would not be down the pit seven hours. I think that we can arrange these things better by negociation with our employers than by depending upon the State to arrange it for us.

(627.) I have an objection to eight hours for men. I mean eight hours for men who are now engaged 7. There are very few men engaged 10 hours down the pit.

(629.) They on the bank principally in connexion with the pit are the men who work 10 hours.

(632-3.) Personally, I am in favour of reducing the boys' hours, and the hours of those engaged in and about the mines.

(634.) I would not say to a maximum of eight. In arranging the hours you want to take various things into consideration. Now, I speak about the eight hours Bill. I think some occupations are more arduous than others, and if an eight hours' shift has to be fixed with justice to the labour itself, then it would be unfair to have a man who was working very hard and a man who was working at very light work working the same quantum of hours. There wants to be some arrangement made with regard to the lightness and the hardness of the work.

(638.) I am favourable to a reduction of the working hours to a maximum of eight hours a day. The difference would be as to the means of getting it.

(653.) Our Association is in favour of limiting the hours of labour; we have done so.

(654.) If I had not thought it was fair I would not have had a hand in it.

(683.) The hours now in Durham are seven from bank to bank as the maximum. There are some men who are working less, that is, those who are near the shaft.

(684.) That would not be the same under a Bill, if they had to stop eight hours down the pit.

(686.) That with some of them would increase it an hour only; with some of them it would be an hour and a half.

(687.) Legislation in the direction of fixing eight hours from bank to bank would make a difference in the arrangements we have now, making it seven from bank to bank. If you said eight, he would be compelled to stop eight, I presume. Of course, I may be wrong, but it looks like that to me.

(688.) I do not say that our men object to it on that ground.

(689.) I say it would increase their hours beyond what they are now working; some of them are working six and a half hours and some seven.

(690.) Those that are working six and a half would have an increase of an hour and a half.

(691.) And those who were working seven would have an increase of an hour.

Mr. JOSEPH TOYN, President and Agent of the Cleveland Miners' Association (9th July, 1891):—

(698.) My evidence has relation to ironstone mining in Cleveland and the North Riding of Yorkshire.

(806-7.) There are a certain number of men working underground whose hours of labour are more than eight. They are in the class that I have just been describing; there are not many of them; they are principally boys and men who are getting the work away, such as rolly-way men, and men on the engine plane, and the men who have to get the work out.

(1068.) Although the hours have been very materially reduced within the last 18 years, nevertheless the output has been, if anything, increased.

(1069.) I mean by that, the output per man.

(1070.) I do not think that process can be carried further -- if you were to still further reduce the hours you would not get an output equal to or greater than the present; it could not be done indeed.

(1072.) If we reduce the hours the output would be reduced, I think.

(1073-4.) Our maximum number of hours is eight from bank to bank. That is universal in the Cleveland district.

(1075.) That means seven hours in the face.

(1076.) Seven in the pit at the face, and the other hour represents half-an-hour going out and half-an-hour coming in.

(1077.) I believe that is satisfactory both to the men and the masters.

(1078-9.) There is a larger output now than when the hours were longer—a larger output per man.

(1080-1.) That is, a man does more work and better work in the short time than he did in the nine or ten hours. He works harder and freer than he did then, of course.

(1082.) The hours in Cleveland, compared with the hours in Durham are a little longer; probably about an hour a day, not longer.

(1083.) And in Northumberland half an-hour longer. I believe Northumberland is about 7½ hours; some of their men work that, I think.

(1168.) There is not any agitation among our men for a further reduction of hours at present, only for some youths, and the men who are getting the work away—probably about 300 or 400 in the whole district—we want to bring them to eight hours, because we believe that eight hours underground is as long for health and wages purposes as any man ought to work.

(1169.) Our men are not at present in favour of any legislative regulation of the hours. They are against it at present; they think the men can regulate the thing for themselves if they like—between themselves and the employers.

(1170.) They object to go any further than that at present.

(1171.) As to the grounds if I were to give my own opinion, I think I should cover the opinions of some of the others. First of all, male adults have the thing in their own hands. Secondly, my own opinion is that if there were a legislative enactment passed for men only to work eight hours, it would cause the unorganised men in the country not to organise if the eight hours were given to them without organising.

(1172.) I would rather keep the regulation of the hours of labour as well as wages in the hands of the men themselves.

JOHN NORMAN, a Cleveland miner.

I have worked for about 20 years in the mines of Cleveland.

(1195-6.) I have heard the evidence which has been given by Mr. Toyn, and in the main I agree with the evidence which he has given, with the whole of it, generally speaking.

(1208-9.) We are now working eight hours. That is considered our time, eight hours a day, or eight hours per shift from bank to bank.

(1210.) I am satisfied with those hours at present, at any rate, and certainly our conditions are very materially better now than they were 20 years ago.

(1211.) I do not believe in legislation. I believe that I am qualified as a miner, if my employer will meet me, to submit my conditions to him and that we can agree matters more favourably than any other persons could legislate for me.

(1212.) I consider legislative regulation unnecessary.

(1213.) I should rather consider it objectionable.

(1215.) I have not considered whether it would affect us indirectly, favourably or otherwise.

(1216.) I do not think a man could work underground for more than eight hours a day without injury to his health.

(1217.) I have worked as many as 14 hours underground. We were perfectly at liberty to work as long as we liked.

(1218.) When I worked more than eight hours a day underground, I found that I suffered in my health and strength from it, and very materially too, although at that time I was younger than I am now. Still, I could not follow my usual employment so often as I can now, on account of physical strength. I am quite of opinion that eight hours in a mine is quite sufficient for any person to work, that is, having regard to his physical strength.

(1219.) I not only think it would injure him physically to work longer than eight hours, I am quite sure.

Mr. JABEZ STRONG :—

(1220.) I am, and have been for some years, a deputy in one of the mines of Cleveland.

(1225.) I have heard the evidence given to-day by Mr. Toyn, and I generally acquiesce in it, but I should like to supplement it in some instances.

(1232.) There is a point about the hours which has never been discussed. The hours of the miners have been referred to, and the hours of the working lad, but we have never got to the hours of the enginemen, and the boiler-minders, and such like in the district. Unfortunately their hours are considerably in excess in the district of what we think they should be. In many instances the pumping-engineman, the fan-engineman, the boiler-minder, and the fireman are called upon to work 12 hours with the exception of the week-ends. That we think is an excessive time to work in connection with this work. We think that there should be some change in their hours, and we live in the hope of improving their

position in that particular instance by conciliation with the employers if it is possible.

(1234.) As to the evidence of Mr. Toyn and Mr. Norman with regard to the question of hours; if you refer to legislative interference, I might say that I quite agree with them. I have a decided objection to legislative interference in connection with the hours, for two particular reasons, I might say for three reasons. I have an objection to it because in the first instance we can settle the hours much more satisfactorily ourselves, I believe. In the second instance, if we admitted the principle that Parliament had a right to interfere with our hours, I do not see how we could object to the principle of Parliament interfering with our wages. That would be only carrying it a step further. That is my impression about it. I think if it was not admitting that principle, it would be sailing dangerously near the wind in that particular instance. I think of course we should strenuously oppose it, as far as I have been able to ascertain the views of the men, and we have ascertained the opinions of the men in our district pretty fully upon that point. We have some of those men. I do not know why they should be termed New Unionists; we have a few in our district who are continually agitating for this movement, but I might say authoritatively that they do not represent 10 per cent. of the men in the district as far as we have been able to ascertain. The men do not seem to support it to any extent whatever. They feel that their manliness to a certain extent should be left alone; that they should not be interfered with in that direction in any way. Of course they believe in parliamentary interference as far as youth is concerned, because youths are not strong enough to protect their physical condition. I believe that eight hours in connection with lads is quite sufficient. I believe that the more so far them than for men.

(1238.) Respecting the engine men, and the boiler men, who are working 12 hours a day, roughly speaking, I should say there are about 100 of them.

(1239.) These men are continually at work, but they are relieved to some extent at the week-ends. From Monday morning at 6 o'clock, they work 12 hours a day, and then an eight hours' shift counts from Saturday morning at 6 o'clock till Monday morning at 6 o'clock.

(1240.) That is an agreement made 12 months ago by the workmen with the employers. The question came up before the Joint Committee. The men expressed dissatisfaction with their hours and also with their wages, and it was relegated to the men's managers, and some of the miners' executive, and their position was improved by reducing the hours at the week-ends, and by slightly increasing their wages.

(1241.) They do not now work 15 and 16 hours at the week-end unless they undertake to work another man's time, and that of course is their own fault.

(1242.) I daresay it is done. Some men are very eager to do it. If they like to avoid it of course they are in a position to avoid it, but some of the men are very eager; some do not care about working overtime, but some are quite ready to go and put two shifts in at the week-end if it is possible to be done.

(1245-6.) I do not think it would be policy to make a universal eight hours Bill; or to go in for a universal policy of eight hours. I do not think that could be successful.

Mr. FRANK STOBART (23rd July, 1891):—

(1963.) Agent of Lord Durham, and in addition to having the control of his property there, I have also the control of his considerable collieries in the county of Durham. I am also part owner of collieries in the county.

(1964.) My family are also large owners in the county of Durham.

(1965.) I am a member of the Durham Coal Owners' Association.

(2006.) As to the reason of the different hours of labour which prevail, they vary according to the class of work. The pit draws coal so many hours. You may take it first of all that all the men that need not be at work during the time that the pit is drawing coal—that is eight hours a day—work only seven and a half or eight hours. First of all the hewers; the pit is drawing coal 10 hours, but there are two shifts of men, each being on an averages even hours from bank to bank; that is probably about six hours at work. Then there are shifters and such men, who need not be at work during the time that the pit is drawing coal. They work eight hours. Then rolley-way men, and men of that kind, are at work during the 10 hours that the pit is drawing coal. They need only be at work 10½ hours. They must be at work during the time the pit is drawing coal; but if they do not work 10 hours you would have to have two shifts of five hours each.

(2010.) There is no agitation in the county of Durham for a legislative regulation of the hours of labour.

(2011.) I think the men are against it. It would be difficult to arrange. The hewers at the present time are seven hours from bank to bank. The boys are 10 hours from bank to bank. If you made a uniform eight hours you would have to lengthen the men's hours (which I do not think they would very much care about), and even then I think you would increase the expense of the colliery so much that we would be unable to compete with other districts. Yo might do it in one way, possibly. You might have three shifts of hewers and two shifts of boys. You see the boys go down in the pit after the men.

(2012.) In order that the hewers may work six or seven hours, somebody else must work more than seven. There are two shifts of men to one of boys. The boys do not go down the pit till two hours after the men, so that if the hewers only work eight hours the boys would only work six. Equally so, many of the off-handed men would work less hours than the men.

(2013.) I understand that in the county of Durham the hewers would not like a legislative regulation of the hours of the work of the men on whom their work depends—that they are against any State legislation.

(2014.) If it were possible to do so, we should be very glad to reduce the hours of boys' work, but I see no possibility of doing it.

(2030.) I think if it could be managed it would be a good thing.

(2074.) The putters work 10 hours a day.

(2075.) Judging from their appearance I should say that that length of employment is not injurious to their health. I certainly never noticed it. It is not very hard work. It is nothing like the hard work of a hewer who is working shorter hours.

Mr. RALPH YOUNG (5th August, 1891:—

(2086.) I am the corresponding secretary of the Northumberland Miners' Mutual Confident Association.

(2087.) The Society represents the coal mining industry of Northumberland.

(2088.) It includes practically the whole of the mining community of Northumberland.

(2089.) In the whole of Northumberland there are 30,041 workpeople engaged in our industry.

(2098.) My printed reply to the following question. What are the hours of labour is:—"Hewers at long hour "collieries, about 7 hours and 30 minutes, and at short "hour collieries, about six hours and 35 minutes from bank "to bank. All other classes of underground labour except "boys, rolleywaymen, and onsetters, 8 hours from bank to "bank. The hours of onsetters and many rolleywaymen "are 10 and 11 hours from bank to bank, the hours of boys "are 10 from bank to bank, except those working in con- "nexion with endless ropes and chains, who work half an "hour longer."

(2159-60.) I do not see any practical way of reducing the hours of the boys, except at a considerable disadvantage to the whole of the workmen, and also to the boys themselves, if you take their whole career as workers, by reducing the hours of the boys, say two hours per day, and bringing their hours down to eight hours per day, that would be a reduction of two hours per day for a matter of three or five years; but then, what would follow? There would be a considerable increase in the cost of production. Wages would consequently at once be much less than they are, and, in addition, the boys would have to work for a period of perhaps 20 years, from half-an-hour to an hour-and-a-half per day longer, so that I think it would be a great disadvantage to the whole of the workmen, including the boys, during the whole of their lives.

(2161.) It would not be possible, in my opinion, to get two shifts of boys. There is a considerable difficulty at present in getting a sufficient number of boys to work the mines under the present system, and if there were three shifts of workmen and two shifts of boys, that difficulty would be increased by 50 per cent.

(2162.) Two shifts of men working longer hours, and two shifts of boys eight hours is altogether impossible.

(2163.) If you take a more favourable view of that, and say three shifts of men working night and day, and two shifts of boys, it would not be practicable, in my opinion, to get a sufficient number of boys to work under that system.

(2164.) As to there being no way of arranging the hours of the hewers and the hours of the boys, so as to give the boys shorter hours, consistently with the general interest of all who are employed in the mines, whether men or boys, I do not see any way. We had that question under consideration at the beginning of last year. Some of our members thought that it might be possible to arrange some plan by which the hours of the boys might be shortened to eight or nine per day. What is termed the wage committee, consisting of ten representatives of the workmen, were appointed to meet and consider the subject, and report to the rest of the members. They met, and were fully convinced, after considering the question in all its aspects, that it was altogether impracticable. The result was, after the subject had been fully discussed and placed before the lodges, that only one colliery out of about 56 voted in favour of eight hours. I might read here the report of the committee upon that subject. "Having been instructed to endeavour "to arrange some plan for shortening the hours of the "boys without lenghening those of the hewers, we very "fully discussed the subject. As regards the hours of "the hewers we are second to no district in the country, "and superior to every other except Durham. The "hours of the boys, however, are not at all satisfactory, "Both the advantages that we enjoy, and the dis-"advantages under which we labour, are due to the double "shift system. The more we discuss the question the "more apparent it is to us that it will be exceedingly difficult "to retain the benefits of that system for the hewers, if we "materially shorten the hours of drawing coal. The first "proposal we considered was that of a uniform eight hours

" single shift for all classes of workmen, including boys. That " has met with approval at many conferences of miners, " and resolutions in its support have been carried at such " conferences by overwhelming majorities. A very brief " discussion convinced us that this is utterly impracticable " for this country; it would almost necessarily mean an " extension of the hours of the hewers; it would certainly " mean the discharge of some thousands of workmen. What- " ever solution may be forthcoming, we are agreed that the " time during which coals are drawn cannot be diminished " to any great extent. Another plan discussed was that of " two shifts of boys of eight hours each with three shifts of " hewers. This we think would probably be more easily " obtained than most other changes that have been suggested; " it would have the advantage of giving moderate hours to " the boys. Two great drawbacks are that it would be very " difficult to obtain a sufficient number of boys, and it would " necessarily involve a certain amount of night working. " Another suggestion was that the pits draw coals 10 hours, " and that the boys have nine hours shifts, a portion of them " going down as at present, and another portion an hour " later. Something similar to this is now in operation at " some of the collieries where 11 hours are worked." That went out to our lodges, who sent their delegates to discuss this report. The discussion took place, as I have stated; they returned to their lodges, and the vote of the lodges was taken, and only one out of 56 was in favour of eight hours.

(2165.) That report says that under a uniform eight hours system there would probably ensue the necessity of increased hours for the hewers, and there certainly would ensue the dismissal of a large number of men. It requires the whole of the time that is now devoted to drawing coals to get the work away produced by the men at present employed, so that if there was taken off from 20 to 30 per cent. of the time available for getting the coals out of the pit, it would

consequently follow that about 30 per cent. of the men employed would have to be discharged. It would be impossible to get the work out that they produced.

(2166.) It would not be possible for the whole of the men now employed in two shifts to find pit room so as to perform their work effectively, with the number of drawing hours, that is, with eight hours drawing.

(2167.) The men are now in two shifts for the most part.

(2168.) If they all go in together, there would not be accommodation in the pits for the total number of men, certainly not; not without they were working in a manner that would be a very great disadvantage compared with the present system. There is a large quantity of the coal in Northumberland worked on what is known as the long wall system—two men generally work together—and if the men all had to go in together, there would be four working where there are now only two, and they would be to a very large extent in each other's way.

(2169.) The hewers work now less than eight hours, and, of course, if there was a single eight hours shift, they would be expected to work eight hours, if that is the point you are raising, I am not sure. In respect to the eight hours, I do not know whether I might say further, speaking for myself, that my objection is not simply on account of the difficulty that would accrue to the workmen in Northumberland, but it is because I think it is economically unsound, and that those districts who now work longest, and expect to derive most benefit from the change would suffer most from its operation. If workmen, say in Wales and in the Midlands, are now required to send away 10 or 11 hours' produce in order to maintain their present position against other districts that are more favourably situated, they would certainly be placed at a disadvantage compared with the position they at present occupy, if they were prevented by Act of Parliament,

or by any other means or methods, from working so long a time. If they were reduced from 10 or 11 hours, say in a normal state of trade (in a time of prosperity like the present, when there is a margin of profit to work the worst of collieries, they, of course, can work shorter hours), but in a normal state of trade in which they are required to work 10 or 11 hours to compete with other districts which are more favourably circumstanced, if they were compelled to work only eight hours many of the collieries would, in my opinion, have to be closed. It would be practically impossible for them to do it.

(2290.) In Northumberland at some collieries—those that are termed the short-hour collieries—the men are down the pit about 6 hours 35 minutes. At the long-hour collieries they are down about from 7 hours and 20 minutes to 7 hours and 30 minutes. Well, then, the men are pretty much like other people I daresay. I do not know whether, if you met them in the town, you would be able to distinguish them from ordinary people that you might meet in the street.

(2291.) The boys are more and the men are less than eight hours down the pit.

(2292.) They attend reading rooms. They have a mechanics' institution at every colliery, I should say, and as I said before, they are nearly all members of co-operative societies, and they are interested in seeing those societies successfully carried on. Then, no doubt, some of them, take an interest in sports of different sorts, just like other people.

(2303.) I do not know whether anyone can fairly prescribe what another shall do. But if a large body of workmen agree, with something like unanimity, that it is advantageous to work under a certain system and under certain regulations, I think that they act wisely in laying down some sort of regulation which they, after full consideration, have concluded will be well for them to adopt.

(2329.) I have no doubt at all that it would be better for the boys if they could work nine hours, better still eight hours, better even still seven hours; but you have to take into consideration what the effects would be. Of course there are other people concerned, and they themselves become concerned as soon as they cease to be boys.

(2330.) As to adult labour, we do not believe in having them fixed by Act of Parliament at all. We do not think it would be advantageous, nor yet practicable to have them fixed by Act of Parliament. It is absolutely impossible in my opinion to have uniformity either in hours or wages under the diverse conditions of the various mines throughout the country.

(2386.) It is absolutely impossible to have one shift of boys at eight hours, whilst the present hours obtain with the hewers.

(2387.) As to one shift of hewers not being sufficient to keep the boys going with the hewers' present hours; the output would be very much diminished, the cost of production would be very greatly increased, wages would consequently fall, and in the end it would be much worse for all concerned.

(2388.) That is the basis of the objection on the part of the Northumberland miners to a fixed eight hours' day.

(2389-90.) We should be glad to have the boys hours brought down to the lowest possible point, provided it was shown to be an advantage for all concerned. Taking the whole of the effects of such an alteration in consideration there is no doubt in the opinion of those who have a practical knowledge of the question, that it would be worse for all concerned to make that alteration.

(2391.) If the boys were reduced to eight hours a day during the period of their juvenescence, then afterwards they

would have to be increased an hour-and-a-half a day as men, from an hour to an hour-and-a-half.

(2392.) That would apply to the hewers.

(2393.) You could not well have a single shift of 7 hours or $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours; the cost of production would be so enormously increased that many of the pits would be closed down in a very short time.

(2394.) The chief objection to the alteration is that it would be undesirable, taking a broad view of it, and that while it would be an advantage to a boy, as a boy, leaving out the reduced wage that he and his parents would get by the increased cost of production, yet taking the boy's career, as a boy and a man, he would be worse off than if the alteration were not made.

(2395.) The argument about the increased cost of production has always been used when the men have tried to reduce their hours, and, of course, quite reasonably so.

(2396.) The cost of production has been decreased by the men working longer time. If you take from 1874, when the hours were shortened, up to 1876 and 1877, there is not the slightest reason to doubt that the cost of production was greater when the shorter time was worked than it was after the men increased their working time. I have a statement here showing that the men increased their production directly after they increased the working time.

(2399.) I would not state that, as a matter of fact, the extra 50 tons per man output since 1874 was due entirely to the additional hour, but I think, in all probability, that it is due to the addition of time worked.

(2401.) There is a time, I think, in which, say, if you take eight hours, if a man worked hard during that time, or if you take $7\frac{1}{2}$ as they now work in Northumberland, in which they can produce the maximum quantity of coal; but if

they go beyond that, according to the way they work in Northumberland, they probably would not send away much more coal, if they go below that they would send away less coal.

(2429.) One reason why I do not look with favour upon the legislative regulation of the hours of adult labour is that we have found in Northumberland the advantages of a system of reducing our hours in certain states of trade, increasing them again and yet contemplating a reduction again, adapting them in fact to the varying conditions of trade, that is one of our strong reasons for desiring to be left free so that we, who are more conversant with the technicalities of the trade and the general conditions of the trade, should be able to adjust our position to the varying condition of trade from time to time. Of course, my own opinion as I expressed it before, is that, from an economic point of view, it is absolutely impossible for Parliament to advantageously fix the hours.

MR. WILLIAM HENRY LAMBTON.

(2579.) I am Secretary of the Durham County Colliery Engine-Men's Mutual Aid Association.

(2580.) Also Secretary of the National Federation of Colliery Engineers.

(2581.) And in the former capacity, as secretary to the Durham County Colliery Engine-Men's Association, I am a member of the Federation Board.

(2593.) The winding men have eight hours, and have had since 1872. The underground men's hours are between 10 and 11. The pumping and fan men 12. The locomotives and sundry others about bank are 11.

(2608.) The underground men's hours have not yet been brought down to that point that we desire them to be brought down to.

(2609.) What I desire is, first, that the hours of the underground men should be reduced.

(2615.) So far as the hours are concerned, I may state at once that rather more than one-third of our men have eight hours. As I have already stated, we obtained that reduction in 1872. At that time, when the eight hours was granted instead of 12, which had been going on for many many years, about as long as I have known anything about the coal trade. We took a personal vote of the whole of the members of our Association to know whether they would continue to work the 12 hours in the future as they had been doing in the past, or whether they would maintain their present wage and have an eight hours. I may say that the vote was returned, and eight or nine to one of them voted that they would rather have their present wage and accept the eight hours than accept 16*d.* per day additional and go on working 12 hours as they had done before.

(2617.) In the County of Durham the underground engine-men working 12 hours shifts are simply the number that have charge of 40 engines. And probably the worst part of the feature is this, that when the men have to change their shift from the day shift to the night shift, or from the night shift to the day shift, a man has to stay 24 hours in the pit, and this at a time when probably there is no one in the pit but himself, or it may be a man minding the furnace.

(2618.) That is to say, if a man has been on the night shift from Sunday night to Saturday night inclusive and then passes on to the day shift, he works the Sunday succeeding that Saturday night. They change in some instances. The man who has been at work during the Saturday will stay the

Saturday night, and then his mate will come in on the Sunday morning and that will change the shift.

(2621.) That is to say, if they are pumping engine men they must so work to keep the mine sufficiently clear of water for the operations of the week.

(2622-3.) If they are winding engine men they are there, in order to lower into the mine, and to raise from the mine, men who are so working underground. According to the Mines Regulation Act you must have a competent person in charge of every winding engine so long as there is any person underground in the mine, and there is generally somebody down in the mine, but of course there is no working or drawing of coal.

(2634-5.) I can mention the fact that at the annual conference which was held on the 19th and 20th May last the question of eight hours and the desirability of having it was discussed at very considerable length. Two proposals were brought before that conference; one was that while it was desirable to have the eight hours, it was desirable to have it by organised effort. The other one was that we should seek it by legal enactment. The matter was put to the vote, and 139, as you will find at the latter end of the report, voted for parliamentary enactment, while 138 voted that it should be obtained by organised effort, but there has not been any action at all taken thereon.

(2636.) A delegate who represents 100 members would have five votes.

(2640.) Our Association regards the hours at present worked by the underground enginemen in Durham as excessive.

(2641.) I gave those hours as being from 10 to 11. I may say this, that while 11 hours is stated to be the shift for underground workmen they work 12 hours in those cases

that I have referred to, but they are paid for the twelfth hour at the rate of time and a half. So that still, really speaking, the men's time of labour has not been reduced, but what they have got practically is an increase of wages.

(2642.) They continue to work 12 hours, but one hour is counted overtime, and for that they receive additional pay.

(2643-4.) It is necessary in working the mines that some of these underground men should be at work during the whole 24 hours; it is very important the work must be continuous.

(2645-6.) The only way really to reduce the hours would be to have three shifts instead of two. That is what we propose ought to be done. We cannot see any other way of reducing the hours.

(2647.) Supposing three shifts were adopted instead of two, and by that means the hours of work were reduced from 12 to 8, and as to whether that change could be accomplished without a corresponding reduction in the wages; I presume in that case some reduction would have to take place in wages.

(2648.) There was no rise offered to us until we had agitated for the eight hours, and as we hoped were on the eve of getting it; and then an offer of an advance of wages if the men continued working was made by the owners.

(2649.) As a matter of fact, when the change was made we had the choice of either accepting an advance of wages or a reduction of hours.

(2650.) We have met the Owners' Committee on three or four occasions, and discussed with them the question of reducing these men's hours from 12 to 8. We have not succeeded yet.

(2651.) In the negotiations entered upon with the owners, we have not offered to accept a lower wage on the under-

standing that there should be three shifts instead of two, and the hours reduced from 12 to 8. We have not heard anything like an offer from the owners that they are prepared to give us the eight hours. I suppose that the question would have to go on step by step by each party until we could arrive at this point when wages and hours would have to be considered.

(2652.) The difficulty is not that if any change is made at all it must be a change from 12 to 8 hours, no intermediate step being possible, further than that we think, having regard to the heated engine rooms and also the impure air that rises from the hot machinery, were there is grease and oil, &c., that eight hours is sufficiently long for those men to be in the mine and in these engine houses.

(2653.) I may say that we are prepared to accept the same rate of wages for eight hours for underground men as is now paid to the winding men. The winding men's wages at the present time are 5s. 3½d., while the wages of these underground men that we are now speaking of stand at 6s. 1d.

(2654-5) That would be a reduction of 10d., whereas the reduction of hours from 12 to 8 would be a reduction of one-third.

(2657-9.) Those excessively long hours apply more particularly to where there is pumping day and night, or drawing coals during the day and pumping at night, and in most of those cases there are men present during the whole of the time; so that it would be an easy matter, apart from the wage question, to divide the shifts into three of eight hours. In fact, you have had the eight hours for underground enginemen in Northumberland since the early part of 1872 in the neighbouring county.

(2695-96.) We take a very strong objection to the decision that was arrived at by the National Federation where there was only a majority of one in favour of parliamentary effort.

We think that more time would be spent in trying to move Parliament to give the eight hours than we should have to spend in getting it for ourselves. That is the main argument used by the Durham men.

(2697.) As to whether our Society is practically unanimous, we took a vote some four or five years ago on the subject, and I may say that a very great number of our members were very indifferent. They did not care to record any vote at all. But those that did vote voted very strongly against any parliamentary interference whatever.

(2698.) When I said that efforts were being made, and negotiations going on, I meant between our Society and the employers.

(2699.) Nothing is being done, or is anything being attempted by the Federation.

Mr. JOHN GEORGE WEEKS (27th October, 1891):—

(2856.) A member of the Northumberland Coalowners' Association and a mining engineer in the county of Northumberland.

(2857.) Have been appointed along with Mr. Lamb to represent the Northumberland Coalowners' Association and to give evidence on their behalf.

(2940.) With reference to the hours of labour of the boys, the employers would be willing to concede shorter hours I think if they could see their way to it.

(2941.) I agree with the objections to any alteration of the present system which were laid before the Commission by Mr. Young entirely. It is not practicable to alter their hours at present.

(2942.) The Association desire no legislative interference at all. They think that the workmen are able and willing to meet the circumstances from time to time as they arise.

(2982.) I am aware that there is a strong and a very natural feeling in Northumberland in favour of shortening the hours of the boys—to reduce them to eight, and I agree that would be a desirable thing if it could be accomplished.

(2983.) I considered the proposal that has been made in favour of three shifts of men and two shifts of boys.

(2984.) I do not think it would be a solutiou of the difficulty. We have considered the various proposals. We have seen the report that was made by the Miners' Association, and we have read and considered that amongst ourselves, and we quite agree that it is impracticable to work our mines in Northumberland upon any other than the present system, and that the three shifts of men and two shifts of boys is not a feasible system for that part of the country.

(2985.) As to its having been said that the coal owners would not object strongly to a scheme of that kind, I do not assent to that at all as representing them. We say it is not practicable. We do not say it is not possible, because I suppose everything is possible, but it is impracticable, as far as our mines are concerned, looking at it from every point of view as far as we can see.

(2986.) With three shifts of coal hewers we could not get the stone men in to do the work required in the time. We find that now, with two shifts of hewers, it takes us very often all our time to follow the two shifts, and therefore if we had three shifts of men in, and those men were working something like six hours at the face, there is 18 hours at the face, and there would be only six hours for the men to shoot the top and bottom stone, which would not be enough. We would have to multiply the number of the stone men very

much, and then these men would have only six hours to do their work in instead of eight. That is one of the strong objections. Not only that, but the hewers would get forward in front of the stone "canches," and it would be extremely awkward for them to work and fill their coals. There would be a further difficulty in getting boys. We have not boys enough now to follow the ordinary one shift. If we had to have two shifts of boys the difficulty of finding the boys would be still greater. There would never be time to put the pit right or to allow the pit to cool.

(2987.) With regard to the difficulty of getting boys, I would say that that is general, it is over the whole country. There is a difficulty in getting boys sufficient at the present time. I am speaking of boys under 16. The Mines Regulation Act limits those boys' hours to 54. Well, our boys work 10 hours under 16 years of age. Therefore many of them only get five shifts of 10 hours, and at a few pits where there are big families you may be able in a few cases to lay idle every fifth boy in order to work the Saturday. In these cases the boys only work 50 hours a week, or 100 in a fortnight. But at the majority of the collieries there is not a sufficient number of boys to work the pits owing to this 54 hours' regulation, and their places have to be made up with boys out of the night shift, shifters, rolleyway men, and other people who have to take their places on the Saturday when we work the six days. Altogether we are, as I have said, pinched for boys as it is already.

(2988.) It is quite impracticable to get a sufficient number to have a double shift of boys.

(2989.) As to there being objections, if not of the same kind, of another kind, to a single shift of eight hours for everybody; that would be equally bad, because, in the first place, we should have to reduce the number of hewers by about 30 per cent. to get the work out by the boys only

working a short time. If the boys were only working eight hours, as it is suggested, there could only be about six and a half hours for the boys to get the coals conveyed along in the place of nine hours at the present time. That would mean at once, supposing the same number of boys are employed, a reduction of 30 per cent. of hewers, assuming we could find them all pit room; but it is not possible, in the way the mines are laid out in Northumberland, and the way the mines are there worked, to find pit room for the men to work a single shift.

(2990.) Supposing an Eight Hours Act were passed, and it had to be complied with, and there was a single shift, the time left for coal drawing, with eight hours from bank to bank for everybody, would not be much more than six and a half hours. Six and a half to seven hours would be the very outside for coal drawing. It would take a man probably half an hour to go to his place, and half an hour to go back, and after he got to his place he would not have coals ready; the boys would have to wait for him. He would have to get the coals ready, and they would not have much more than about six and a half hours to travel the coal from the working face to the bottom of the pit.

(2991.) So far as Northumberland is concerned, my opinion is that a single shift of eight hours would be out of the question altogether. That is not only my opinion, but the opinion of the Association which has discussed it, and that was everyone's opinion at that discussion.

(3038.) As long as we work the double shift, I do not see how we could reduce the boys' hours.

(3068.) The men, through their representatives, have not made any representations for reducing the hours all round. They have never asked us to reduce the hours of labour all round to 8. They know it would not work, therefore they have not come forward with such a proposal.

(3069.) I have been where I am now since the year 1872—19 years—in Northumberland.

(3072-3.) The Coal Mines Regulation Act provides 54 hours per week for lads under 16, and the Act of 1872 did the same.

(3074.) I do not consider that boys working that number of hours find it injurious to their health—not the slightest. I have asked the medical man, our colliery doctor, whether he thought their hours were at all injurious to their health, and from what he told me, and what I have seen myself, I think their present hours do not affect their health in the slightest.

(3086.) Suppose that the young men who now work 10 or 11 hours were required to work only 8 we would have to get adults then, because we have not boys to do the work.

(3088.) As far as our own Association of Workmen is concerned, I think their wish is, when they can, to get the boys' hours shortened with a view to giving the boys more leisure time for other purposes on the surface. I rather fancy the idea of a universal eight hours day is to find more employment for the spare population.

(3089.) That desire does not emanate from the Northumberland miners at all. They see that if the boys' hours were reduced, it would entail longer hours upon themselves.

(3090.) I think the motive is, possibly, partly with a view to the boys' health, and also that the boys may have more leisure to educate themselves, and to enjoy themselves, by being fewer hours in the mine. It is not on account of the hardness of their work when they are there.

(3091.) I think the physical labour of the men is much greater in itself than the physical work of the boys.

(3092.) The boys' hours are sought to be curtailed in order that they may have more leisure—the men already have sufficient leisure.

(3094.) I do not think there is any hardship at all upon the boys working 10 hours, either as to their health or even their enjoyment.

(3095.) If the boys did work shorter hours than they do at present I think it would lead to very great inconvenience, and, in the normal state of trade, to the closing of many collieries.

Mr. ROBERT ORMSTON LAMB :—Chairman of the Northumberland Coalowners' Association.

(3125-6.) I have heard the evidence given by Mr. Weeks on behalf of that body, and generally concur in it.

(3128.) The Association is opposed to legislative interference with the hours of labour, and we consider that, to shorten the hours of the boys would be detrimental to our mode of working; in fact, having regard to the quantity of coal produced in Northumberland owing to the arrangement of the collieries, it is essential to have a double-shift system. Without this double-shift system I do not suppose any colliery could be worked to a profit.

(3129.) Any scheme for shortening the hours of boys must proceed, I think, upon the basis of the continuance of the double shift of hewers, that is recognised by all.

(3139.) I agree with Mr. Weeks as to the difficulty of shortening the hours of the boys in Northumberland.

(3140.) If it could be done, certainly I would consider it a desirable thing to have them down to, say, eight per day—if it could possibly be done. But the question has been thought out, and it is the general opinion amongst all the

experts I have spoken to, that it would be impracticable. I do not think, though the time the boys may stay down the pit now seems long, that the nature of their work is detrimental to them. I have not heard that they suffer from illness, and they always appear to me, when I have seen them come from their work, exceedingly cheerful, and in good preservation.

(3142.) Apart from questions of increased cost of production—apart from the economic side of the question altogether, I think there would be great practical difficulties in reducing the hours to eight in Northumberland. I understand it that to carry out our present system of working it is essential to us—it would be impossible to reduce the hours.

(3143.) The coal trade in Northumberland, for a great many years past, has been a very unpaying property to hold. It is only latterly that there has been an improvement—during the last three years. I do not think you would get any discreet coalowner to agree to work his collieries in view of the fact that the prices are not only now falling, but are falling rapidly, and that we do not know what they may be in the future; and, if before we could not work the collieries without a loss, one would not invite a loss by increasing and enhancing the cost of production upon a falling market.

(3187.) "On the 19th December, 1887, the men requested "that eight hours in the 24 be the maximum day's work for "all persons employed underground where the single shift, "and seven hour where the double shift is worked; the time "to be reckoned from bank to bank. On the 21st January, "1888, Mr. Burt and deputation attended; at the outset "the chairman stated that the owners could not accede to "request. Some conversation ensued on the points raised, but the deputation did not press the request." I remember that: that is an extract from the minutes of the meeting that took place.

(3187a.) "The Chairman stated that the owners could not "accede to the request.

(3188.) I think I was the Chairman of the meeting on that occasion.

(3189.) We have not the absolute words spoken on that occasion given. It is only given indefinitely that the Chairman declined to accede to the request; that some conversation ensued on the points raised, but the deputation did not press the request. I have read from a copy of our minutes.

(3192.) If they had pressed their claim I should fancy it would have resulted in a strike.

(3216.) The hours of the Northumberland miners, just now, are about seven-and-a-quarter, I think.

(3219.) As to what logical reasons there can be for colliery proprietors, whose men are only working seven-and-a-quarter hours, to take any objection to the eight hours;—In my opinion it is this: We found that for some 10 or 12 years the collieries in Northumberland, speaking for almost all, but, I believe, not absolutely all, ceased to be profitable, and had the hours been altered by legislation, we should absolutely have been ruined, or, at least, if not ruined, we should have had to bring into the collieries a very large capital, greater than we had. Certain collieries with which I myself have been connected were, at that period with a very large capital indeed, for from 12 to 14 years unremunerative, and had there been eight hours, I have no doubt that, instead of continuing these collieries—they have been worked profitably now during the last three years—we should have closed them, and they would have been driven out of the coal trade.

(3220). We compete with all persons producing coal, whether in Scotland or Wales. I should say that our great

competitors in the steam coal trade are more the Welsh coal-owners.

(3221.) We have also in Scotland strong competitors for the class of coal which we have in Northumberland, particularly for the north of Europe—a very great competition.

(3223-4.) If you restricted the hours, say one hour, of course, you would restrict the output of coal very materially and raise the price. It might benefit us in that way, but we should have no certainty that foreign coal would not be produced to a greater extent than it now is, and that we should get competition there.

(3225.) Any benefit we should get by having a universal day's work we should lose by the boys' hours being shortened.

(3226.) I am quite satisfied that if you did succeed in England in getting an eight hours' Bill you would have to reckon with an enormous increase of production abroad in coal and with the conditions under which that coal can be worked. There has been an enormous increase of production in Germany during the last 10 years. Another reason would be that the cost of coal to the manufacturers would be serious. In the north of England a large number of manufactories have been put down owing to their being able to obtain cheap coal. It would be very detrimental to them, of course, if they found, through the shortening of the hours, that the quantity of coal produced fell off, because the prices must go up.

(3245.) I do not know exactly the advantages and disadvantages of other districts which have different seams. In Northumberland we have the thin seams of coal, and it would be impossible, I think, at low rates of wages for the men to live if you reduce the hours below what they are now. The earnings of the men were, comparatively speaking, very low until three years ago.

(3246.) It might be brought about, but I think it would be very detrimental, both to the owners and to the men themselves.

MR. GEORGE JAQUES:—Coal Miner, working at the Walker Colliery, in the county of Northumberland.

(3261.) Have worked as a coal miner for many years; I am now 46 years of age. I commenced to work in the mines when I was between 10 and 11.

(3262.) I commenced in the county of Durham.

(3272.) I am very desirous that the youth of the age in which I am living should have better facilities and opportunities of acquiring information mentally, and so cultivating their minds; and I consider that the shorter the time that a young man or a boy is employed in a mine, whether his work be light or whether it be hard, the better for him. The very fact of being confined in regions below, I think it is feasible to suppose, will be more detrimental to his health than favourable to it. Although we have had evidence given here to-day of a certain doctor saying that it does not affect their health at all, yet I think that if they had more sunshine and more recreation above ground there would be a tendency for them to be more healthy. Not only that, but, as a member of the Northumberland Miners' Association, I am not at all satisfied with the efforts the Association—I will not say have made—but I am not satisfied with the efforts that they ought to have made. I have here a copy of the rules, and I see it is recorded on the wrapper of those rules that the Association, of which I am a member, was established in January, 1863. I find, when I open the wrapper and look into it, on the first page, that the primary object of the formation of the Association—it is marked with the letter B.—" is to shorten the hours of labour

"of boys in mines to eight hours per day." Consequently I hold the opinion that when the Association was formed it was formed with that avowed object to limit the labour of the boys in the mines to eight hours per day. I believe that the leading men in this country that I have referred to are not opposed to what I may term an eight hours labour day, but they are opposed to an eight hours labour Bill. In that position they are opposing me, but I am not opposing them. If they will set the machinery of the Union at work to get an eight hours Bill, I will assist them. What I want is an eight hours day, got by hook or by crook, so long as it is got; Now the thing narrows itself down to this point, with me. If an eight hour day isto be got, can it be got by any other means than a strike or a law? In my opinion it cannot. The owners have been asked to concede it, and they will not, and, because they will not, my impression is that our Association cannot enforce it. I have endeavoured to ask myself the question, and to answer it as well as I was able: If an eight hours Bill was passed, would it be an advantage or a disadvantage to me as an individual and to the county I belong to as a whole? In my own humble opinion I think it will be a decided gain to us. And I may say further, before I go into any further remarks on this subject, my own candid opinion is this: that the men who are supposed to oppose us do so from a mere selfish point of view. I may say that we do not receive any opposition from anybody but those who hew coals, or that do not work in the pits at all, or, if there are any pitmen who oppose it, they are coal-hewers. I would like that to be particularly noted. What opposition we have received in Northumberland has come from those who never descend a pit, or those who do descend and who are hewing coals.

(3276.) I quite agree that those hewing coals are the large majority of the persons employed. The numbers that they represent, according to the last census we had of the mining

industry, is something like 11,840, I think. I have come to this conclusion, that if an eight hours day was procured, either by negotiations or by a law (but I would prefer it being got by a law), instead of it being a disadvantage to us it would be a decided gain; because I contend this: I have a letter before me here which I have received from Mr. Ralph Young in the early part of the year in reply to a letter that I wrote to him asking if he could give me any information as to the number of boys working in Northumberland mines who work 10, and the number who work 11 hours, or if he could not give me the exact number of boys as individuals, could he give me the number of collieries in the county which work 10 hours a day, and which work 11 hours a day. I have it before me here that five-sixths of the steam coal collieries in Northumberland at that time were considered as 11 hours pits. The date of that is February 16th, 1891. There are some adults underground who work 10 hours a day, and 11 hours when the pits are drawing coals 11 hours; that is, I mean, the on-setters and the rolleyway men, and what I may term putters and hewers, they have been accustomed to go in with the boys and ascend at night with the boys as well. When I add the one to the other we get a total, according to the last returns I was able to get hold of, of 9,300 odd, who work in and about Northumberland mines over 10 hours a day.

(3277). Including surface men. Of course I expect that if a Bill should be passed it will affect them as well as underground men, because their hours are practically fixed and regulated by the hours of the boys who work now 10 hours a day. Then I say that, looking at the hewers as 11,000 odd, and the boys and surface men as 9,000 odd, even if it should be that an Eight Hours Bill should cause the employers to make the hewers work eight hours, we may say each of these hewers will have an hour a day put on to them: that is 11,000 odd, taking two off each of

the others, multiplying the 9,300 odd by 2, it gives a total of 18,600. So, while we allow the owners to take 11,000 hours off, we get 18,000 for it. Consequently, looking at the thing from a common standpoint as affecting the county generally, I think it is a decided gain to us as a county. I think a Bill is most preferable, because I think we cannot get a shorter working day, at least an eight hours working day, without some serious struggle, I may say I also find that the miners in the year 1887 had the question brought before them on two separate occasions. On each of these occasions at the delegate meetings the resolution in favour of an eight hours day was carried by overwhelming majorities.

I have referred to illustrations where we have seen the impotency of our Association, and I have come to this conclusion: In the whole of the coal trade, as far as I can gain information, the Midland Counties, and, I believe, the Welsh Collieries and the Welsh Federation and the miners of Scotland, and wherever there are coal fields, and colliers getting coals and employed about coal mines—I believe there is a unanimous feeling and desire for a limitation to eight hours per day, but Northumberland and Durham seem to stand in the way, and to try to prevent it if possible. And why they should do so I am at a loss to understand, because they every one admit that legislation in the past—the two Coal Mines Regulation Acts that we have got, in 1872 and 1878—have been of immense benefit to us, and we seek to get further legislation on other points.

(28th October, 1891):—

(3288.) In my letter to the Commission of July the 24th, I said "I feel sure that I could state a simple and workable plan by "which all who work over eight hours a day could be limited "to eight, while at the same time all who work less than "eight hours a day would still do so, and the owners could

"extend their hours of coal drawing, and the public would "have a fuller and cheaper market for coals?"

(3289.) I may say that in studying this question I have been forced to come to the conclusion in my own mind that if it should really become so that those who work now more than eight hours per day should either be compelled or be disposed to work only eight hours, we shall have to adopt one of three separate courses. One course would be the adoption of a single shift during the daytime. Of course I go against that entirely on this ground, that I am afraid if it were to be adopted it would be to the disadvantage of Northumberland as a county, because it would displace a very large number of both men and boys; it would fling them out of work for some time. Consequently I do not entertain that idea at all. Then, in my opinion, the second course would be to take two shifts of men and boys, each having eight hours. I take it for granted that, as I have already said, the chief reason why many of our hewers object to it is because they are afraid it may lengthen their hours, and on that ground I think the entire county would reject a proposition of that sort. I think the difficulty could be met by adopting three shifts of hewers and two shifts of boys, the hewers each to work six-hour shifts and the boys each to work eight-hour shifts. I have repeatedly asked this question through the public press and when I have been in conversation with the opponents of the measure: "What "other objection than an unwillingness to adopt it stood in "the way?" and it is only recently that we have received anything like a lucid statement of objections.

I contend that this means will satisfy the whole of those who want an eight hours labour day, and will also satisfy those who are opposed to it, because it will give them something less than they really now are working. I say that I think it is very simple and workable. One of the chief

objections that my friend Mr. Burt raised to it, was that it would partially entail upon the county a portion of night-shift working, or men and boys working at night time. I may say I agree with him that as a county we are as much opposed to that as we possibly can be. Instead of increasing the night-shift work, I believe the feeling of the county is to decrease it as much as they possibly can, but of course we know it cannot be entirely abolished. I think that objection is not so strong as would appear at first sight, because I think that those who went in early in the morning would have an opportunity of getting out a good deal earlier than they do now. There is no regular stated period for the boys and others in the daytime taking their meals. My arrangement is this, that at the middle of each shift there should be a total cessation of work right throughout the mine for 30 minutes, that all hands might have an opportunity of taking their meal, and taking it comfortably, and then when the 30 minutes were expired all hands to commence work again. I may say that is another feature that I would like to see introduced in any change that is brought about by further mining legislation.

(3327.) I propose that the hewers should work shifts of only six hours.

(3328.) My impression is that the men would take the shorter hours with a reduction of wage rather than go on as they are.

(3329.) I admit that it would, as a matter of fact, impose upon them a reduction of wage for a while. I think it would be so at the beginning.

(3330.) I think the state of trade in a very short time afterwards and the state of the labour market would bring up the wage to what I may term its normal state.

(3337.) I say that the wages at present earned with the shorter hours are higher than those formerly earned with the longer hours. That is exactly it.

(3338.) If the same process were to continue and the hours were still further shortened, wages would, at least, not fall. I do not anticipate their rising very much.

(3339.) I do not think the hours could be shortened indefinitely without affecting the wages of the workers.

(3340.) I think, however, that they can be shortened from the present number of $7\frac{1}{4}$ or $7\frac{1}{2}$ down to 6 hours, and without diminishing wages.

(3353.) I do not say that I have the authority of any section of the Miners' Union to speak on their behalf further than this. We had that matter talked over when we met, and I may say it was a unanimous understanding among us that the very fact of my having been returned to the Congress us a delegate to represent the Northumberland miners was an indication that that the Northumberland miners wanted the eight hour question at least ventilated in the Congress.

(3354-8.) At that Congress as delegates, there were 10, and out of the 10 there were nine who opposed.

(3359.) I take it that my appointment was an indication that they were favourable to the eight hours. I may say as an explanation of that, that in the list of names that was sent out into the county to be voted upon, I was, I believe the only one in the whole list who was looked upon as an advocate of the eight hours; but if there had been more, my opinion is that there would have been more returned.

(3389-90.) In dealing with full-grown men, I would say that by Act of Parliament it is to be penal for them to work beyond eight hours per day. Even for increased pay.

(3405.) I had a record that ballot papers were sent out to the collieries; they were, but I never saw one and never learned of there being one at our colliery,

(3406-7.) I made no complaint to our lodge secretaries on the subject, because I did not think it would have any effect.

(3408.) The question was "Are you in favour of an eight hours working day?" Those who voted for were 211; those against, 744. I was aware of that fact when I gave the record of the votes yesterday.

(3409.) The reason I did not mention it when referring to the number of votes that had been taken on the subject was because I had not it in my memory at the time. I have nothing to fear from it, because I have a record of it somewhere or another, if I could only lay hold of it.

(3411.) When Mr. Fenwick and I were appointed to go to a Miners' Congress at Birmingham the miners were asked: Are you in favour of your representatives voting in "favour "of the eight hours for all men and boys working under-"ground? No, 113, Yes, 85."

(3441-3.) I say that the employers would not take very much, if any, harm by their adoption of the Eight Hours Miners Bill now before the country. I heard Mr. Weeks and Mr. Lamb in their evidence yesterday speak on behalf of themselves and the Coal Owners' Association, and I heard how emphatically they opposed the eight hours; they would take some amount of harm, but I have already said I think they can afford to bear it.

(3521-3.) The question submitted to a vote was—those of you who are in favour of obtaining an eight hours labour day—by legislation—vote; those of you who are against it, vote. I really cannot remember the number of votes, but I may say that there was a preponderating majority against it.

(3524.) It would be somewhere about correct, that three voted for, and all the rest against it.

(3525.) Then, subsequently, the discussion was continued at Seghill colliery, and the result there, was that four voted in favour.

(3527-9.) I think it was in the month of March in this year. I may say that the meeting was held on a night which was a very inconvenient night for getting a good congregation.

(3530.) As to whether it is true that of the four who voted at Seghill three of them went from Walker colliery, and were those who had voted at Walker. I really cannot tell, I took so little interest in the vote. I expected the vote coming that did come—I fully anticipated that. I said I had not gone there to win a score in the matter of voting, but I had gone there on an educational mission, and I entered into the discussion with the object of disseminating views.

(3534.) If my intention should have any effect on the Bill it would be a Mines Regulation Act for eight hours per day of 24 for all underground workers, because I consider that the surface labour would be regulated by the hours of those below.

(3535.) In case Parliament conceded the request and established the legal eight hours, I do not think the owners would be justified in demanding that every man should work the eight hours.

(3536.) We would not ask Parliament to give us an eight hours day Bill, we would ask Parliament to give us an eight hour limit to those who work over eight.

The Bill that I go in for is entitled "The Mines Eight Hours Bill."

(3538.) If it is a legal eight hours day I say I think the employers will not be justified in demanding that every man shall work eight hours, but of course I do not concern myself about the employers' interests very much.

(3539.) I think that my scheme of eight hours means to limit the hours of those who work over eight, and to leave those who work less than eight to be looked after by those who want them to work more.

(3541-4.) As to whether if Parliament deals with the hours and fixes the limit, the employers would have a right to ask Parliament, having dealt with the hours, to state the rate of remuneration, I may say that I think that is anticipating something that we have no dread of coming. I do not think they would.

(3614.) As to whether in the reduction of those hours the men should obtain the same wages or earnings in the shorter hours as they do now in the longer hours, I would suggest that if they could not have the shorter hours without a proportionate reduction, they might take it then with the proportionate reduction of wage.

(3615.) As to whether it would be fair to a man who does not happen to be as strong as his neighbour in another stall, that he should be limited to eight hours, while another man can do far more work in the same time, I think that anything is fair which is agreed upon before you commence. A man would know the conditions that he went to work on, and if he assented to it, I think it would be fair enough then.

(3617.) In my experience as a pit man, I have known many men who can earn as much in seven hours as another man can in eight or nine.

(3618.) I think that it would be a decided benefit to each and every working man, both to the strong and to the weak.

(3626.) I propose to make it penal if a man or a youth works more than eight hours under ground in the day.

(3627.) I consider that the hours now worked are not so conducive to safety as they would be if they were shortened.

(3628.) I am not prepared to say they are exactly unsafe.

(3629.) As to whether I consider that the men are unhealthy in consequence of working the number of hours they now do, I may say from my own experience, if I may speak as a representative, that I have sometimes, nay, I may say frequently, when I have been compelled to work day by day successively, and to work the full time, such has been the excess of toil and the amount of perspiration that I have given off, that at the latter end of the week I have been so worn down and fatigued and incapacitated that I have been obliged to stay at home to recoup my strength and energy.

(3630-1.) When I was a coal hewer I was working seven hours from bank to bank.

(3632.) That is my own experience, and I may say it is the experience of a good many more besides.

(3633). I say that I would not allow any body to be down more than eight hours.

3634-5.) I would not compel them to be down eight hours, nor any given number of days a week.

(3636.) I do not go so far as to say that it would be unlawful for an employer to allow a man to be down for more than eight hours, but that it would be optional for a man whether he would be down eight hours or not, or how many days a week he worked.

(3637.) I would certainly agree to have an understanding come to between the employers and the employed to this effect, that no man nor boy shall work more than eight hours, and that their time should reckon from bank to bank. If by arrangement any class of work could be done in less than eight hours I would not compel that class of men to stop down the whole of the eight hours. With regard to the number of days worked, I do think that the employers will

be justified in insisting that each and every man and boy, when able, should attend to his work every day in the fortnight.

(3638.) The custom now is eleven days per fortnight, five in one week and six in another.

(3639.) As to my answer to Mr. Balfour, that I considered after a time the hewers would earn as much money in six hours as they now do in eight. I can only surmise it would be so because it has been so.

(3640.) As to how that particular change is going to come about, I cannot explain how that has come about I feel that it is a difficult task for me to explain how it can come about, but I recognise the fact all the same.

(3641.) As to whether it must not come about in one of two ways—either that the man works harder, or that he is paid more money, I do not know that the man works any harder. I think that the whole of my experience as a miner is that hewers generally work as hard as they can, and I do not think a man can work any harder than he can.

(3643.) After what I said about the idea of the working harder, I think it must come then by the owners paying more money.

(3644-5.) As to what Mr. Weeks said, and what some of the other Northumberland gentlemen and miners' representatives have said, that for about 12 years, up to 1889, the Northumberland miners were mostly losing money, I may say that these 11 or 12 years are included in the whole of my time, and I may say that is the general expression of colliery owners all over the northern district. We frequently hear that cry repeated. But then, of course, as the saying is in the North, it goes in at one ear and out at the other. We pay no heed to it; we do not believe it, in fact.

(3646.) I do not believe that they were losing money. We think that they are not so foolish as to work the collieries at a loss.

(3647-8.) We must admit that when a proprietor has started a colliery it is rather a serious thing to stop it.

(3649.) We think that the gentlemen and miners' representatives, who have come here and said that they consider the Northumberland collieries were working at a loss, have stated that which is not correct. I do not say that individually I do not believe it. I say that the class of men I represent generally discredit such statements.

(3651.) My own opinion is this, that if we are to trust in the integrity of the gentlemen who have spoken, it ought to be accepted until it can be proved to be otherwise.

(3653.) I would make it unlawful for a man to perform any other employment during the remaining 16 hours of the day.

(3654.) As to whether the day hands should be paid the same rate of wages for eight hours as for ten, if they could get the same rate by all means I would urge them to take it, but I would prefer, if they could not get it without a proportionate reduction, that they should take it with the reduction.

(3655.) I think it would ultimately be that the reduction of hours must come out of the pockets of the employer.

(3656.) I cannot say that it is exactly fair.

(3657-8.) The hewers work by the piece, if they work shorter hours, they will have to be content with less wages unless the price of the piece-work be increased.

(3659.) In my letter to the Commission I referred to one of the advantages of my scheme resulting in cheaper coal to the public.

(3661-62.) As to whether I admit that if they work shorter hours they will hew a less amount of coal, I daresay that the amount per man might be less, but the aggregate day's work would be more, I think. My meaning is this, that while the colliery employed more hands the out-put would be greatly enhanced.

(3679.) Assuming that a majority of the members of a trade were against a legal day, I would not force that legal day upon them, not if a very strong majority were against it; but I would not prevent it being operative by simply a bare majority.

(3680.) In Northumberland the miners, I think, are agreed to the principle of an eight-hour day.

Mr. JOHN WEIR:—Secretary of the Fife and Kinross Miners' Association.

(3724-5.) The working hours of the underground men are eight, but not from bank to bank.

(3726-7.) From bank to bank, I should fancy if you are allowing about half an hour or three quarters of an hour more that would be about the average time the miners would be working underground there; that is from bank to bank. 8½ from bank to bank.

(3728.) Those are the hours of all underground workers—boys, men, and off-hand men.

(3769.) The men in our district are very decidedly of opinion that the eight hours should be enforced by a legal enactment in mines—that there should be a legal eight hours day for miners.

(3770.) We have been working as a district since 1871 on the eight hours system, and our contention is that notwithstanding that we have been working these shorter hours, we

have been able to keep our own as a district with the other districts in Scotland where ten, eleven, and twelve hours have been worked. We hold our own so far as wages are concerned, and I think our coal keeps its place pretty fairly in the market, notwithstanding we are working the shorter hours.

(3771.) Our hours in Fife and Kinross are much shorter than those of Lanarkshire.

(3772-6.) Our hours have been now what they are for 20 years, since 1871, we brought it about by organised effort and after considerable sacrifice.

(3777.) We had no strike that I remember of in any of the districts in Fife, but there were strong efforts made by the employers to compel the men to go back to the long hours by refusing to send hutches to them in order to take out their output.

(3778.) That was after we had forced them, they were not conceded by the employers, we forced the shorter hours from the employers. The employers were unwilling that the shorter hours should be begun. The men began to work only eight hours in spite of the employers, and in order to force them back into the long hours, the employers refused to send in hutches or tubs to take their output away during those eight hours, and caused the men to lie in many cases for 1s. 2d. and 1s. 6d. a day for some time. That is how they tried to fight the eight hours. But we overcame the difficulty, and succeeded in establishing it, and have kept it ever since.

(3779-80.) After a struggle, which could not be described as resulting in a strike, we brought about the result described. That is my recollection of that time, and we have maintained it since.

(3781.) But now we are of opinion that it would be

expedient that underground labour should be by law limited to eight hours. We hold a strong opinion, and that opinion of course is grounded on the fact of having the experience of 20 years of that system, although it has been got by trade union effort.

(3782.) I rather prefer the men to have the right to say whether they would or would not have an eight hours day.

(3822.) With regard to a legal eight hours day, at present we work in the Fife district eight hours, not from bank to bank but at the face. Eight hours at the face is reckoned to be the rule by which we work, but I believe the average working at the face is considerably less than that in consequence of the stoppages. We stop 30 minutes for breakfast, so you will observe that eight hours at the face does not properly state the case.

(3823-4.) The legal eight hours would hardly affect our actual procedure. I do not think it would affect us very much, it would leave us very much as we are at present, but it would make a difference. We would have less trouble to keep obstreperous members from breaking away from the eight hours.

(3825.) As to whether that implies that there are a considerable number of our men who would desire to work more than eight hours if the Union permitted them to do so, I do not say a considerable number, but I have referred already to instances where contractors have a tendency to work extra hours in consequence of their having extra interest in working overtime.

(3826-7.) I think serious harm would result from a certain number of men working more than eight hours, it would injure the men themselves, and it would create an irritation among other men and probably lead to large numbers

following the lead of those who were working more than eight hours to the general detriment of the district.

(3828.) There is a general disinclination to work more than eight hours a day or we would not have maintained it so long, and I believe, although there was an inclination on the part of a number of the men, it would take a long time for those men to operate before they would influence the rest of the men.

(3829.) I think ultimately the fact that a few did work more than eight hours would cause others to do so; there would be that danger I say, and it would give us greater difficulty to keep the whole body of the men working strictly to the eight hours.

(3830.) I consider it would be a serious evil if they did work more than eight hours, most assuredly. It is for their own sakes, and I should say for the sake of the above-ground workers as well.

(3832.) As to whether I think the Union in fixing eight hours a day is a better judge of what is good for these men than they are themselves, there are a great many men whose opinion as to what is good for them is not to be relied upon.

(3833.) As to whether in general I would prefer to be allowed to manage my own household in these matters, we do so, but you would not say that an individual of a family would have a right to upset any family arrangement.

(3834.) The miners of a district are on organization the same as a family.

(3835.) I think the advantages of a uniform eight hours are so great that I would prevent by custom certainly and possibly also by law any individual from exceeding these hours; I have a strong opinion on that point.

(3837-8.) We in Fife have been able to get an eight hours day by our own exertions. As to thinking it would be impossible for the miners in the west of Scotland to do the same, that is a hypothetical question. I can only speak from experience in that matter. I do not know what may prevent them in the future, but I know what prevented them in the past. Opposition on the part of the employers, and the want of organization among themselves.

(3839.) In our own case there was opposition on the part of the employers, but we had organization.

(3841.) Because these men are apathetic and decline to organise for their own benefit I would ask Parliament to interfere and act for them. I would have no hesitation, because our experience has shown, and our employers agree with us, in saying that it has done no injury to the trade. Our experience has shown that it would be a good thing for these men.

(3842.) As to our experience having shown that it is a good for us, but not shown necessarily that it is a good thing for any other district, if the district is similarly situated I do not see why it should not.

(3846.) Before we come to any decision upon a question so important as this, it is essential that we should examine into the economical conditions of one district as compared with another, I am looking at the conditions under which coal is got there. It is got from seams that can be easier worked than those in Fife in most instances; that to my mind is a sufficiently broad fact upon which to found an opinion that an eight hours' day could be worked with as great economic advantages in that locality as in Fife.

(3849.) As to my belief from a consideration of the position of the coal seams and their thickness in the west

of Scotland that an eight hours' day could be as successfully worked there as it is in Fife, the reason it comes about that it has not been adopted is as I have told you, from the opposition of the masters and the want of organisation and want of energy among the men.

(3855.) I have stated that by Trades Union effort we won 20 years ago, and have maintained practically eight hours in Fife.

(3856-7.) During that 20 years the coal trade has fluctuated very much in Scotland as elsewhere, and reductions of wages have taken place repeatedly with a view to adjusting the wages to the prices and the condition of trade very frequently.

(3858.) During all the vicissitudes of trade, and at times when the difficulties were greatest, we, surrounded by a comparatively disorganized district, entering the same markets with comparatively disorganised men, have maintained the advantage that we won at that time by Union effort; but I might be allowed to point out that apart altogether from Union effort, we are of opinion that the employers are quite convinced that their position would not be improved in the least by compelling us even under the most adverse circumstances, to go back to the longer hours. I have heard them state myself, at least some of them, that they had no desire to ask the men to go back from the eight hours to the longer hours, and as a matter of fact it is clearly demonstrated by our experience that the eight hours' system, both for employer and employed, has been a complete success economically.

(3859.) We have succeeded by persisting in working the eight hours, and they from experience have come round to our view.

(3860.) As to whether that does not tell, so far as it goes, very strongly in favour of organisation as a method of obtaining an object of that kind, undoubtedly it goes a long way

to say that it can be obtained if you have a certain class of men to deal with by organisation.

(3863.) As to leaving the working men to have a say as to whether they would veto or object to an Eight Hours Act, it has never entered into my mind to limit that option to anything less than trade, because take it as between district and district it might have a very serious effect on some districts as against others.

(3865-6.) The trade which would have to exercise an option upon the passing of such a measure would be the coal trade of the United Kingdom, not Fife and Kinross by itself, or Lanarkshire by itself, or Northumberland or Durham by itself.

(3867.) It would be the coal trade of the United Kingdom that would, in my opinion, be justified in declaring whether the Act was to become operative in respect of that trade—that is my view.

(3907.) In answer to a question by Mr. Burt, I said that if Parliament gave the majority of the men in a trade the right to fix the hours of labour, I would make the whole trade and not the district the unit.

(3908-11.) I said that otherwise different districts might adopt different hours of labour, and so one district might be placed at a disadvantage as compared with another. That is possible; but one district at present is at a disadvantage as compared with another in so far as they work different hours.

(3913-4.) I really do not think it would be a great hardship now to alter the balance of advantage and disadvantage. I do not know how it might affect the north of England.

(3915.) I cannot see how it would operate by throwing men out of employment. My notion is the opposite way.

(3917.) [When you replied that if different districts were allowed to fix their hours differently, one district might be placed at a disadvantage as compared with another, you implied that the difference of hours might constitute an advantage or a disadvantage. Now that difference exists at present. Therefore, at present one district, according to your view, must in that respect be at an advantage as compared with another district?] Well, that is so to a certain extent, although I believe there are other countervailing advantages. For example, the West of Scotland works long hours, and we work eight hours, yet the employers in our district always complain that they are handicapped with the long hours in the west. We reply to that by saying, you have a steadier class of men; they work with more energy and more constantly than they possibly would do if longer hours prevailed; consequently from the steadiness of your service you are able to recoup yourselves for any disadvantages you may experience in connection with the districts that work longer hours.

(3918-9.) [Let us grant that to be the case, still that advantage would continue in Fife, supposing an eight hours day were established, and the result would be to place the west at a disadvantage as compared with Fife?]—I do not think so. It would create a steadiness and energy among the men there.

(3920.) [How long would that take to bring about?]—Well, it would not commence at once, I suppose, but it would take less time than 20 years, I am sure.

(3922-3.) I think that there are other trades in which it would be desirable that the men should not work more than eight hours. I am quite frank to admit that; my opinion is this. In all the trades where it has been shown by experience and where there is a desire on the part of the men that an eight hours day should and can be worked, my opinion is

that Parliament should interfere and settle the number of hours for those trades. That is my view.

(3924 5.) [Now supposing the effect of an eight hours day was to raise the price of coal who would be the sufferers from that rise in the price of coal ?]—I expect that those who consumed the coal must pay the price and therefore the loss would be the loss of those who consumed the coal if there is a loss in it.

(3926.) [And the gainers would be the trade in question ; in this case the mining trade. If an eight hours day for miners was established the mining trade would gain at the expense of the community generally, or rather at the expense of the consumers of coal ?]—Well, that is clearly hypothetical.

(3927.) [I am asking whether that is your view ?]—It is not my view. I have always found that when the price of coal was high there was a gain all round. I do not know where the money came from, but it did not come out of the pockets of the general public as a whole, because the general prosperity of the country was such that prices of other things went up as well, and recouped the buyer of coal.

(3928-9.) [In that case the high price of coal is a sign, not the cause of prosperity ?] It always has been. I think the danger is very infinitesimal of raising the price of coal through the eight hours day.

(3931-2.) [Suppose the effect of a uniform eight hours day for miners was to obtain a gain for this particular trade at the expense of the community, do you think Parliament would be justified in interfering on behalf of any one trade in that way ?] If it is for the safety and for the health of those that are employed in that particular trade, I say certainly. The grounds upon which I really base this

demand for legislative interference are the grounds of the health and safety of the miners.

(3933.) Mining in respect of danger and unhealthiness, is not different from all others; there may be some trades as dangerous and as unhealthy, but whenever that exists I consider there should be a limit of the working hours to the lowest possible.

(3934.) [Before you can differentiate one trade from another in respect to the way in which it is treated by Parliament you have to show or ought to be able to show that that trade differs very markedly from other trades with which no such interference is proposed?] I do not suppose that it would be necessary to show that in every case. If it was shown that economically the trade could stand to be reduced in hours apart from the considerations of health and safety altogether, then it might be quite legitimate on the part of a trade to ask Parliament to interfere.

(3935-7.) [I thought a minute ago you acknowledged to me that the only grounds upon which Parliament could be expected to treat one trade differently from another were the grounds of danger and unhealthiness?] That is in cases of urgency. I put it on the ground of urgency. Wherever you find a trade in such circumstances as I have described it is urgent that it should be dealt with. On the other hand another trade could come forward and ask Parliament to interfere to regulate their hours if they were of opinion that economically their trade could stand such interference. I may frankly confess that eight hours is quite sufficient for anyone to work.

(3938.) I am inclined to the view that Parliament should be asked to establish an eight hours day for other trades than mining, if those trades want it.

(3939 41.) Besides danger and unhealthiness there is the consideration that the work of mining is laborious. That is one of the grounds upon which I say that the miner should not work any longer than eight hours. He is not able to work much longer.

Mr. DAVID MORGAN (29th October, 1891).—(3942.)—Agent for the Aberdare and Merthyr Miners' Association.

(3943.) I appear to give evidence on behalf of that body.

The hewers would be from bank to bank something like 9½ hours to 10 hours.

(3969.) And the surface men's hours are something similar. Then with reference to the remedy for that, as I have stated before, the men are most unanimous in reducing the hours of labour to eight hours per day of operation, something similar to what we are working the nine hours a day now, or 54 hours a week; and they wish to have that by legislation. Our argument in favour of legislation is that we believe the object of legislation at all times is to protect the weak against the strong, and our experience, in reference to contending with the capitalist, is that we are to weak too maintain our position. We are not in favour of eight hours from bank to bank, because eight hours from bank to bank means in the great majority—almost universally—that the actual working of coal hewers would not be more, on an average, than about 6½ hours. Therefore we take it that we cannot ask for that; we believe that the state of the country does not permit it at present.

(3975.) I would seek an eight hours of winding coal, or eight hours of operation in the colliery.

(4012.) As to whether the views of our Union agree

generally with the views of the other unions in South Wales, with the exception of this question of eight hours, I think we we do agree, but we differ upon that point. We say eight hours of operation, and to get that by legislation, but the others, as I understand them, go in for eight hours from bank to bank, which means a vast difference.

(4028-9.) The Union does not endeavour to prevent men staying one or two hours longer in the mine than the normal time. We persuade them not to do as much as we can, but we do not apply any compulsion.

(4034.) The men are almost unanimous in their wish to reduce the hours of labour to eight and by legislation.

(4042-5.) We say that they desire this change by legislation because they would be too weak to maintain their position —that although they might gain the eight hours in good times, they would be too weak to maintain that position in bad times. I lay down the general principle that it is the duty of Parliament to protect the weak, and that therefore it should interfere on behalf of the miners in this case.

(4050.) If the men turn tyrants on the employers, then I would say protect the employers.

(4051-2.) [Then it comes to this, does it not, that in all disputes between employers and men, Parliament is to interfere and regulate the business?]—I would not go so far as that, but, in reference to the hours of labour, I say that Parliament should intervene. I would not go so far as to say that Parliament should interfere in the wages question.

(4053.) I should not like to see Parliament interfere in the question of wages, because I believe that might bring about the result of destroying competition altogether, and hence it would be detrimental to this country, in my opinion.

(4054.) I think if Parliament were to interfere with wages it might have the effect of dislocating trade.

(4055-6.) I do not think it possible that trade might be dislocated by an interference with the hours, because, as I understand, our Continental friends go in for eight hours as well as ourselves, and if they go in for eight hours we can easily compete with them in any part of the world.

(4057.) I would not be an advocate of an eight hours' legislative day in this country unless there was a simultaneous legislative eight hours' day in foreign countries.

(4058.) There are not laws to that effect already in foreign countries at the present time, but they are going in for it.

(4059.) I believe if this country were to go in for it, other countries would follow.

(4062.) I, and those whom I represent, would be in favour of introducing this change into England before it is introduced into foreign countries, in order to be an example to others, and I believe that others would follow.

(4063-4.) I believe it would be injurious to us afterwards if they did not follow. If they did not follow, we should have to return to the present system, it might be.

(4065.) My measure of what the Legislature ought to do is simply the requirements of our own particular district.

(4066.) I do not go in for what the miners in general advocate—an eight hours' day from bank to bank.

(4067.) That would not do in our district, and, therefore, looking to the wants of our district, I propose that Parliament should pass a Bill providing for an eight hours' *working* day for the whole of the country.

(4069.) I think Parliament ought to determine the number of hours according to the needs of the Merthyr and Aberdare

Valleys, and that would be applicable to the other districts, in my opinion.

(4070.) It may be possible that the other districts do not think so.

(4088.) I would not allow any man, under any circumstances, to work more than eight hours if he desired it.

(4089.) I am referring to the underground mine. I would have a general eight hours' Bill for miners.

(4110.) [What would be your scheme to prevent men from remaining underground any length of time, as they are able to do now?] I would put it that they must be at a certain mark—say the lamp station—for eight hours.

(4111.) I presume that nine hours from bank to bank would answer the purpose.

(4114.) All other districts in Monmouthshire and South Wales are favourable to an eight hours Bill from bank to bank. That is the representation, at any rate.

(4130.) As to whether I consider that the number of hours a man works has anything to do with the amount of earnings he should obtain, of course a man cannot produce as much in seven hours as he could in nine.

(4131.) [Do you intend that the workmen shall earn the same money, assuming that your wish is gratified, after the hours are reduced to eight as they do now]. So far as the piece-workers are concerned they would not do it, because the less they could produce the less money would they receive. But it might affect the day wagemen. But, in my opinion, the reduction of hours by one hour would not have much effect upon the produce, and therefore that would do away to a great extent with the argument about reducing even the day wagemen.

(4132.) As to whether I would make it obligatory to work regularly, and to work every day in the week, I do not say that I would go so far as that. There is another thing. As I have said, it would not be so necessary, because naturally they would work more regularly themselves.

(4133.) [Then the employers are to be bound on the one hand, and the men are to be free on the other—is that it?] —Yes.

(4178.) I do not wish to enforce the eight hours against the wish of anybody, because, so far as my district is concerned, they are almost unanimous.

(4179-80.) I have been willing to be governed by the majority in any trade, the majority, say, in South Wales.

(4181-2.) Assuming that the Aberdare and the Rhondda Valley did not wish to have eight hours enforced upon them, and the Merthyr and Rhymney Valleys did, I would still enforce it upon the Aberdare and Rhondda against their will, if they were in a minority.

(4275.) If owing to the reduction of hours of working a collier got less coal, he would have to receive less money.

(4276.) As to whether that would not increase the cost of production by the general charges having to be divided over fewer tons, it would to a slight extent, but not to a great extent; because I believe that the production would be much more regular than it is at present, and so compensate the employers for the little extra cost of production.

(4277.) I do not admit for a moment that the production would have been lessened taking a twelvemonth all round.

(4280.) The men are working more irregularly at present than they would under the eight hours' system, and they

would produce much more coal during the first days of the week than what they are at present.

(4281.) As to whether it would not be necessary to make it compulsory that they should work eight hours in that case, I do not see that at all; because there is a danger in that; using a weapon of that kind may prevent a man going out when he is ill.

(4284.) Assuming that the amount produced were less, I agree that the working cost per ton must be more. I will admit that, assuming that it was the case, but I do not admit it for a moment.

(4285.) [Out of whose pocket ought that to come?]— Out of the pockets of the public I expect.

(4286.) If the coal-owners would not get as much as would give them a remuneration, I daresay that they would soon stop their collieries; that is our experience at any rate.

(4287.) [Do you not think it is a very serious thing to stop a colliery which may cost from £100,000 to £200,000; do you not think they would go on to the very end before they stopped it?]— It is serious for the colliery owners, no doubt, and equally so for the men.

(4288-9.) I believe that the employers can take a little less remuneration than they get at present. I think that they have so much profit that they can afford to have less.

(4290.) I do not say that that is so throughout the country, but taking the great majority they can afford to have less remuneration than they have at present.

(4326-7.) What I stated is this: that a collier or a coal hewer would not produce as much coal in eight hours as he would in nine hours. Take the production of a colliery all round for a twelvemonth, under the eight hours' system they

would produce as much coal as they do now because the production would be ever so much more regular owing to the fact that there is so much lost time at present, and then there would not be as much lost time. Some would work more than what they do at present.

Mr. ISAAC EVANS (17th November, 1891);—Agent of the Neath, Swansea, and Llanelly Miners' Association.

(4400-1.) The hours of labour in our district are nine hours per day as a rule for underground men from bank to bank.

(4402.) Those are the recognised hours for all classes of underground men. I do not mean to say by that that nine hours are strictly enforced; that is that some places do not work less than nine hours, and some places from bank to bank may not be above nine hours, but those are the recognised hours of labour throughout our district.

(4403.) The hours of surface labour connected with the colliery would vary a little; some are ten hours and others are ten hours and a half.

(4414.) We believe the hours at present are too long, and we should like to see the hours reduced. We believe that eight hours from bank to bank would be sufficient, particularly in our district, for any person to be underground. We believe conscientiously that eight hours from bank to bank in our district would be sufficient for any man to be underground. Without saying anything as to the impure atmosphere or anything of that, we believe that it would be beneficial to the workmen at large if the hours were reduced.

(4417.) Our Association wish to limit the hours by legislation.

(4513.) We had a conference with the employers in 1890, I think, or in 1889, in South Wales, where we then asked the employers to admit the principle of eight hours, but the employers did not see their way clear. After that we had a general conference with the employers, with the representatives of the Miners' Association of Great Britain, and with the miners' representatives of South Wales, and we met there in London on two occasions, but we failed to bring about any sort of arrangement between ourselves, although we believed then as we believe now that eight hours from bank to bank would be a sufficient number of hours for any person to work underground. Having failed in that direction, we think now there is nothing left but to appeal to the Legislature.

4519-21.) [Supposing that the workmen of South Wales were unanimously of the opinion that eight hours was long enough to work from bank to bank, could they not enforce that opinion by a general strike?—It is possible we could do it, but I should be very sorry to test our strength in that direction. It would bring the whole thing to a dead-lock.

(4522-3.) In the present condition of South Wales I think it is better that Legislature should enforce that without coming to the extreme point of war.

(4582-3.) I referred to the hours of working. I say they are nine hours from bank to bank, that is the recognised rule, and I think they should be eight.

(4594-5.) [If a man has a hard place which would take him 8½ hours to do his day's work in, you would not allow that one man to stop in the half hour extra to make his wages up equal to the other man's?] Certainly not. Not over eight hours.

(4596.) I do not think there is a danger if you ask Parliament to deal with the hours that the employers will ask

Parliament to deal with the wages. I think there is no necessity for going to Parliament to regulate wages.

(4752.) [Assuming there is plenty of work, is it part of your scheme that 48 hours per week shall be worked by each man, assuming eight hours per day is carried out ?] Not 48 hours of actual labour, because it would not be more than eight hours from bank to bank. What we say is eight hours from bank to bank, and not 48 hours' actual labour.

(4757-8.) I would expect them to agree to the eight hours, because I do not see for my own part how it would increase the cost of production. As a practical man, I say that as my deliberate opinion.

(4766.) [If the colliery owners could prove that the cost of production would be greatly increased by reducing the number of hours you would not insist upon it ?] I would insist upon it. What I say is this, that I would insist upon eight hours being adopted all through the coal-fields of Great Britain.

(4767.) Whether a section of the workmen or a large section of the workmen liked it or not, I would enforce it.

(4772.) [And, regardless of the consequences, you think eight hours must be the time which pitmen in the future must work ?] I believe so.

(4881.) I believe that an eight hours day is essential for the miner, because I believe that eight hours is sufficient for any man to be underground for one shift.

(4882.) [Do you mean that if he is underground for more than eight hours it seriously injures his health ?] I should say that it does, more or less.

(4886-99.) I consider the dangers to miners would be very materially diminished by reducing the hours from nine to

eight. I consider that the increase of safety secured by a legal eight hours day would be so great as to justify our coming and asking Parliament to interfere on our behalf in a way in which I would not propose to interfere with any other industry. I do not think it would be the cause of closing collieries. I would insist upon legislation, whether the economical effect was disastrous or not.

16. Mr. ALFRED ONIONS:—Secretary of the South Wales and Monmouthshire Miners' Federation.

(4979.) In regard to the reduction of the hours of labour, I would have it by legislation. I think that eight hours from bank to bank is a sufficient length of time for a person to be employed below the ground.

(4980.) In the first place I am of the opinion that it would be beneficial to the health both moral and physical of the men employed underground, and I have also reason to believe that in those districts where the greatest number of hours are worked per day the largest number of accidents take place, from falls of roof and sides more particularly.

(4981.) I think that when it can be proved that the miner's life is in any degree endangered, or his limbs endangered, legislation should step in and say that that shall not be so, as it has done on previous occasions.

(4982-3.) [You think it could be shown to Parliament that the difference between a miner being underground nine hours, and being underground eight hours, would so diminish accidents or illness, as the result of protracted underground labour, as to justify that?]—I think it would as regards accidents. It is chiefly upon those grounds—the grounds of safety—that I would ask Parliament to step in and reduce the hours of labour by Act of Parliament.

(5002.) It is my opinion that it would improve the social and moral condition of the men to have their hours reduced, that it would give them more chance to improve themselves, and they would be less hours in an atmosphere which is calculated to damage their health, and they would have an opportunity also of improving themselves mentally and morally.

(5010-11.) I mean that in those districts where the long hours are in operation, there are more accidents caused by falls of roof and sides than in those districts where the short hours are in operation.

(5012.) I am taking the hours as a whole. I did not pick out any particular hour in the day. I am talking of them as a whole, and I deduce this from it, that it is the long hours which must be conducive to the greater number of accidents.

(5018.) [Now your view was that if safety was in any degree endangered by the longer hours, those hours should be reduced; but if on that ground you are to reduce the hours from nine to eight, would not the same argument be good for a reduction from eight to seven?] Oh, certainly; if it could be proved that by reducing the hours it would be conducive to the well-being in general of the community and to the miner.

(5019-20.) [If you were to reduce the hours to zero, clearly there would be no accidents?] Certainly not, it must be a question of degree. If we carry it out to its logical issue, we should say of course that there would be no accidents at all if there were no men employed in the mines; but my contention is a comparative one. I compare it with other districts, and therefore I say this, that if collieries can be carried on in one district with these short hours, and if it can be proved that they have less accidents than in those districts where the long hours are in operation, then I think the law should step in and give the short hours all round.

(5021-2.) [I understand your contention to be this: that if the hours were reduced from nine to eight there would be a very material and marked diminution in the number of accidents?] I suppose there would be a reduction. I would not qualify it by saying a very material or a very marked reduction, but I would say that there would be a reduction in the number of accidents.

(5034.) I cannot see any reason why the cost of production should be increased, or even the productive power of the mine reduced by a reduction in the hours of labour, and I base that upon the fact that in those districts where the short hours are worked the greatest production per man is in vogue.

(5035-6.) It is my experience that a man who works nine hours underground is in a more exhausted state mentally and physically than a man who only works eight, and he is better able to take the several precautions against accidents if he only works eight hours. I would naturally infer that from the statistics.

(5037.) Nine hours underground and not from bank to bank; generally speaking these are the recognised hours with us.

(5039.) [Would half an hour cover the going up and down in your district?]—In some collieries it would not take that much, in others it would take more; I take it as an average.

(5041.) The wages of the hewer depend upon the amount of coal he cuts.

(5042-3.) I believe that the hewers in South Wales and Monmouthshire—and I speak more particularly of the steam coal miners now—could do their work in a shorter number of hours than they do at present, and if the employer would

provide them with the necessary trams to fill the coal, that their wages would not be reduced. There is no reason why the production per man should not increase.

(5045.) If the man does not produce so much coal he must have a reduction in the price of his labour unless his cutting price is increased.

(5057A-8.) I believe it would be hopeless in our district to get a reduction of hours by arrangement. As I have said before, it would be impossible to have a continuation in my opinion, and a uniform system of hours unless legislation does step in. I think that legislation is preferable to the misery and loss of a strike.

(5098-100.) The principal reason I want the eight hours is that I think it would conduce to the welfare of the men. That is my case, I have not yet got out the statistics as to whether the occupation was more unhealthy than others or not. That is my opinion.

(5101-2.) [I want to ask you this. If a man were bound to come out and be at the top or on the surface of the ground in eight hours, do you think it might conduce to his trying to get his coal out without putting timber up properly?]—I do not, because I believe that, so far as my district is concerned, generally speaking—and as I have said before, I refer more particularly to the steam coal—that he would have time to do his work, and do it well, and do it with safety.

(5103.) [Do not you think the fear would be that he would be in a great hurry and think, "Now the roof will stop up "a little bit longer; I am bound to be out in 10 minutes, "and therefore I will run the risk"?]—A man with foresight and practical experience would not be led into a trap of that kind.

(18th November, 1891) :—

(5126.) [Could you tell the Commission what number of men of those whom you represent have testified to this eight hours ?]—I say I represent directly the 8,000, indirectly the 15,000 to 16,000.

(5129.) There was a mass meeting at Ebbw Vale in 1889 when there were from 8,000 to 10,000 people present and there was not a dissentient voice or hand.

(5159–61.) My belief is that collieries working on shorter hours, everything else being equal, there is less risk of accidents. My table supports that there are fewer accidents in the short-hour district generally than in the long-hour district.

(5232.) If a man knew when he was going down the mine that he was coming out at the end of eight hours, or would be on the bank again in eight hours, he would go more freely to his work than he does at the present time, and I believe he would come out of the work less physically exhausted than at the present time.

(5233.) I do not say that he would work harder. I have not admitted that yet; and that he would be both in a physical and mental condition to enjoy social intercourse and improve himself mentally and morally. I believe, taking all these things into consideration, that the men under the eight hours system from bank to bank would attend to their work much more regularly than they do at present.

(5237-8.) [Is it your opinion that if the hours from bank to bank were reduced to eight, the men in your district would work forty-eight hours per week ?] Am I in giving an answer to that question to understand it to mean this: would the men be willing to work under a law which would compel them to work forty-eight hours per week and nothing less ?

If you ask that question, I say no; they would not be tied down by Act of Parliament to work forty-eight hours per week and nothing less.

(5239-43.) In my opinion, if there was an Act of Parliament passed limiting the hours of labour to eight hours from bank to bank, and that was the system adopted in the district, the men would on the whole loyally abide by it; and as I have already said, they would more faithfully carry out that system than they do the nine hours or the 9½ hours; that is my opinion. I think they are the best judges as to whether it is necessary to work 48 hours per week.

(5244.) [Then they are to be the sole judges, the owners are to be bound on the one hand not to carry on their operations beyond eight hours per day; but there is no obligation on the men on the other hand to go to the colliery at all?] In that respect it would not alter the position of the owners from what it is at the present time.

(5251.) [Assuming that you could be satisfied that it would increase the cost, would you recommend the men in your district to insist upon an eight hours shift?] I would advise them to go in for the eight hours shift.

(5252.) [Regardless of the effect?] Regardless of the cost. I think that life is before cost, and the commodity must be raised to meet that in order to increase the safety of the mine and be conducive to the welfare of the miners as a whole.

MR. WILLIAM EVANS, recalled—

(5612-4.) I think the collieries in the Aberdare Valley are similar to the collieries in the Rhondda Valley; working the same seams, and practically under the same conditions.

(5615.) [And would you suggest that the thousands of colliers in the Aberdare and Merthyr Valleys, who would be

content with nine hours from bank to bank, should be forced to comply with eight hours from bank to bank because the Rhondda Valley collieries require that?] Yes, if the majority of the workmen say so, and certainly they think it would be to their interests from all points of view.

(5616.) [Do you say that the majority of the workmen in the district, or the majority of the workmen in the kingdom, should decide this?] Well, in South Wales especially; I believe in Home Rule.

(5617.) [Then suppose South Wales went in for it, and Monmouthshire did not, would you leave Monmouthshire alone, and say that South Wales alone should have the eight hours?] I have not studied it to that effect, but, as I have said before, we have held meetings, and the vast majority of our men are of opinion—it is a unanimous opinion—that eight hours' work would be of great benefit.

(5618.) [Have you considered the effect upon the cost of working a colliery that the reduction of the number of hours would have?] No, I am not in a position to know that.

(5619.) [Would you still persist in it if the cost was such as to entail the closing of a number of collieries?] Yes.

(5620.) [And throw men out of employment?] I do not think it will entail the closing of collieries.

(5621.) [I am asking you to assume that it would for a moment; would you still insist upon it?] Yes, but I am far from believing that it would.

MR. LANGFORD RIDSDALE—

(5732.) I appear here as the representative of the Coal Owners' Association of the Tamworth district.

(5733.) I am a mining engineer and coal-owner.

(5776.) [Have the men approached you with a view to obtaining an eight-hour day from bank to bank?] No.

(5777.) [Are they in favour of an eight-hour day from bank to bank in your district?] To some extent, but not very largely, I believe. I think it is fair to say that on the whole they are satisfied with the times as they now stand.

Mr. ENOCH REES, on behalf of the members of the Anthracite Miners' Association (19th November 1891):—

(5786.) With reference to the eight hours working day which it is intended by the intervention of State to secure for miners, we, as a district, are in favour of a system of eight hours from bank to bank, as we consider that is quite sufficient for men who toil hard underground.

(5797.) As a rule the workmen earn more money now with short hours than they did when working 10 and 11 and 12 hours.

(5798.) The rate of wages per ton has not increased since that arrangement was made.

Mr. GEORGE CALDWELL:—

(5800-3.) I am a director of the Moss Hall Coal Company Limited, and of two other companies, also ex-president of the South Lancashire and Cheshire Coal Association.

(5804-5.) The Moss Hall Collieries are situated at Platt Bridge, near Wigan, in the West Lancashire district, and the other collieries are situated also near Wigan.

(5838.) [What are the hours of underground men, particularly hewers, in West Lancashire?] Eight, nine, and ten any collier is at liberty to come up most of the pits in West Lancashire any time after 2 o'clock.

(5840.) These enumerated hours—eight, nine, and ten per day—represent from bank to bank.

(5841.) It means this: colliers are allowed to come up any time after 2 o'clock; some of them come up at 2, some at 3, some at 4; therefore it is entirely optional to them after 2 o'clock whether they stop down longer or not.

(5842.) Any man can come up after 2 o'clock if he thinks proper.

(5843-44.) So that those who went down shortly after 5 would be down in that case nine hours. But if they did not go down till nearly 6, they would be only down eight hours.

(5845.) They are expected all to be down at 6 o'clock; the colliery is expected to begin winding coal at 6 o'clock.

(5886.) There are a considerable number of men who are willing to work nine or ten hours when they are not compelled to work more than eight hours.

(5887.) I think the majority of them are in favour of the eight hours movement, but there are a great many who do not favour it at all, and many who are in favour of it would not be in favour of it, I think, by legislation.

(5894.) I think it would—in fact it must undoubtedly—lessen the output very considerably, because it would only mean about $6\frac{1}{2}$ hours winding, and in that time we could not raise the coal with the present machinery, and it would not be safe to put larger machinery at greater speeds than is now employed for that purpose. The speeds are very quick indeed, and the engines are very large and can produce great quantities out of each pit; as the pits are becoming so much deeper it is a matter of necessity that you should pull up coal in large quantities because you have to go over a so much larger area from each pit.

(5895.) It is a question of winding.

(5896-7-8.) [What are the hours of winding at present?] From 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. That is just eight hours, and that is actual coal winding.

(5900.) Those hours would have to be reduced supposing we had a legal eight hours day from bank to bank to six and a half practically, or six or seven.

(5901.) I do not think we could make up the deficiency by improvements in the winding apparatus.

(5902-3.) [Would an eight hours day materially increase the cost of production?] Very materially, and in times of depression its introduction would probably lead to the closing of a good many collieries.

(5905.) It might increase the regularity of attendance; but my experience of colliers is that they like a day or two a week under any circumstances.

(5906.) During times of depression they still have their holidays, as you will see by one of the statements I put in, because even in the very worst periods there was 9 per cent. and 10 per cent. of absentees when the wages were at their lowest.

(5907.) [Have your men ever approached you with the view of obtaining an eight hours day?] They are frequently talking about it, but we have had no regular organised demand.

(5934.) We have heard of it in the papers and so on, and the men have been continually talking about it; but we have had no special demand that I am aware of.

(6044.) As a rule in West Lancashire the hewers at any rate are not bound to be down more than eight hours.

(6046.) I have lived among the colliers all my life, and I do not consider that the hours now worked in West Lanca-

shire conduce to accidents in the mines by reason of their length.

(6047.) [Do you consider that the men suffer in their health from the length of hours which are in vogue in West Lancashire?] I think they are as healthy a class of men as any other, and as a matter of fact I think the statistics go to prove that. If I remember rightly, they rank next to the agricultural labourers, either before or after—I think they come after parsons, if I remember rightly.

(6048.) [Then you would say, making the comparison, that they are not less healthy than other persons in the neighbourhood?] No, as a matter of fact they are not exposed to all the vicissitudes of the climate that we have when we are above ground; they are better off a vast deal than a navvy who is liable to the tempests we have had all through this summer; they have more equal temperature and all that.

(6049.) [I think you said that if the men did work 48 hours per week, speaking of the hewers, it would be a gain in hours?] No doubt.

(6050.) [But in order to bring that about would it or not be necessary to make it compulsory that the men should work eight hours a day and six days to the week?] I am sure it would if they are to make eight hours.

Mr. GEORGE WATSON MACALPINE:—

(6110.) I am sole proprietor of the Altham Colliery, which is situate at Altham, near Accrington, in the North Lancashire district.

(6177.) The views of our Association on the question of limiting the hours of underground men to eight are not very favourable.

(6178.) The principal difficulty is the limitation of th hours of winding coal.

(6179.) To limit the hours of hewers to eight from bar to bank would in my opinion shorten considerably the hou of coal drawing.

(6225.) [What would be the effect on the output of reduction of the hours of work to eight hours a day?] I our district I think it would undoubtedly reduce the outpu

(6226.) [Can you form any estimate of what the reductio would be, what percentage of the present output?] Eigh and three-quarters is the number of hours worked, an probably if we reduce the output in the same proportion fro eight and three-quarters to eight we should get at th alteration of the output; it would be in proportion to th reduction of hours.

(6227-9.) I think it would be pretty nearly in the sam proportion as the reduction in time from bank to bank. I would increase the cost of production somewhat.

(6230.) [So materially as to close a certain number o collieries in times of depression?] I think perhaps no Collieries are not so easily closed in our district.

(6231.) [Does that mean that at present you are earnin a sufficient margin of profit to enable you to stand the los which an alteration of that kind would cause?] That i rather a difficult question to answer. The margin of profi is not sufficient.

(6232.) It would reduce the margin of profit to a ver trifling thing at most collieries.

(6233.) [Have the men ever asked you to reduce th hours of work to eight?] Not specifically, not definitely a our colliery. We know that they are in favour of eigh hours provided it is generally conceded.

(6234.) [Their attitude is merely that they are willing to go with the majority of miners in the country, but they have no very special grievance of their own in the number of hours now worked ?] That is not exactly what I meant to indicate. What I mean to indicate is that they would willingly have the eight hours, but they would not have the eight hours, as far as I understand their views, while other collieries in the country are working nine.

(6269). [I think I understood you to say, that no organised or united application had been made by the workmen in North Lancashire for eight hours ?] That is so. I think I am right in stating that I have no recollection of having been applied to on the eight hours question.

(6293.) There are very thin seams in North Lancashire.

(6294.) We do not find that the present hours of labour are detrimental to the health of the men.

(6295.) We would not think it right at all, speaking as a matter of principle, to regulate the hours of adult male labour.

(6296.) I said, I consider the output would be reduced if the hours were also reduced to eight.

(6297.) [That being so, would the men earn the same wages ?] I think not.

(6299.) [If that were the case, do you think the men would be in favour of being limited to eight hours ?] If you are speaking of their present views I suspect they are. Whether they might change them when they get the eight hours is another question.

(6300.) I do not know whether the men imagine their wages would be reduced by the hours being reduced.

(6357.) [Your hours are eight and three-quarters ?] That is so ; the average hours from bank to bank.

(6358.) [If they were reduced to eight from bank to bank, the hours of labour at the face would be reduced by more in proportion?] That is so, because the travelling to and fro would be a constant quantity practically.

(6359.) [And you are inclined to think that would greatly raise the cost of production?] It would, to some extent, undoubtedly.

(6360.) It is quite impossible to estimate what the effect of the changed conditions of labour would be.

(6361.) The actual amount paid to the person working at the face for getting the coal would not be made greater necessarily; his earnings would depend upon the coal he got.

(6362.) [And therefore the cost in that respect would not be increased?] No; there are the permanent costs of the colliery, however.

(6363.) And those would be applicable to seven and-a-half hours instead of eight hours, or something of that kind.

(6385.) [Now you said in answer to a question that you opposed any interference with the hours of adult male labour?] That is so.

(6388.) [Are you opposed to restrictions on the right of an adult male to work on Sunday?] I think adult males can be left to look after themselves.

(6392.) [You have expressed an opinion here that the reduction of the hours of labour from eight-and-three-quarters to eight would reduce the output; is that opinion based upon any statistics or information, or only upon general ideas?] We can have no statistics of the effect of the reduction.

(6393.) [But have you heard of cases in which the reduction of the hours of labour has not diminished but actually increased the output ?] I do not know of any cases.

(6394.) [If the workman at the face of the coal hewed as much coal with the reduced hours as he does now, the cost of production would not be increased, would it ?] There is always the difficulty of winding; that introduces a limitation.

(6395.) [Would the increase in the cost of the product by the difficulty of winding be appreciable ?] The out-put of the colliery would be reduced.

(6396.) [No, the output would not be reduced if the man at the face could hew as much coal in the seven-and-a-half hours as he does now in eight ?] It does not matter how much he hews if he cannot get it drawn and wound.

Mr. ARTHUR SOPWITH (8th December, 1891) :—

(6418-9.) I am a mining engineer and I am vice-president of the Cannock Chase Coal Owners' Association.

(6420.) I have been appointed by our Association to give evidence on their behalf.

(6447.) [What are the hours of labour in the collieries in the Cannock Chase district ?] About nine hours from bank to bank, in some cases less.

(6448.) [Is it of the hewer that you are now speaking ?] I am speaking of all classes in our district.

(6468-9.) I desire to offer some opinion on the effect of the legislative limitation of the hours to eight in our district. One of the principal questions is the fact that our collieries, being principally household collieries, the trade in summer

is always very slack, and very often during the mid-summer we only work about three days a week. The result of an eight hours day (which would reduce the drawing of the collieries by one hour) would place us in this position, that during the time of good trade, and when men and masters have a chance of making money with the collieries, then in the first place they would be limited in their capacity for drawing, and also the men would not be able to make up the loss of time in the summer that they have made up hitherto. They cannot do it by working harder, and consequently it would be a loss both to capital and labour. I may say with reference to this, that it is very certain that the limitations of drawing, as far as regards winding, have reached the very outside, and it is practically impossible to have double shifts in our districts or to have any modification of them, so that the loss in winter, which is completely lost trade, would be practically gone.

(6473.) [I see that it is stated in your answer that the men actually engaged in undercutting or holding coal do not work more than six hours ?] That is so. What I mean by that is that a man actually engaged in undercutting coal, if he works hard all the time, I think that it might be taken that he cannot work more than six or seven hours at that one occupation alone. I am perfectly prepared to admit, and I think a great many people would say, that if a man was to set to work and work as hard as ever he could he could not go on continuously at this one occupation of undercutting for six hours; and the way I view it is this: that undercutting the coal in a constrained position which a man is in is one in which he requires cessation from work occasionally, and that he cannot really keep on at his work and do more work in a certain time, in a limited time. If he has eight hours, we will say, to do six hours work in, it would be something like a fair proportion. I think that if a man is longer down the pit he might possibly do six-and-a-half or seven hours

by having occasional rests; but I would certainly say this, that if the hours are reduced, then the men in our district would not be able to work more than four-and-half or five hours at undercutting, and, therefore, they would really be in a worse position than they are now. What I mean is not that the six hours has to be distributed over a longer term of hours than at present, but that men cannot do in five hours what men can do in the present hours.

(6474-5.) [You do not mean to have us understand that the men are only six hours at the face?] Oh, no; but actually engaged at work; that is the extreme limit that they are. That is only for one class of work. The hewer, being we say on the average nine hours from bank to bank, occupies a part of that, possibly not more than an hour, in going to the face and in coming back from the face to the pit bottom.

(6476.) [And then another half hour in meal time, is that so?] Yes, and occasional rests.

(6477. [And that would still leave him seven-and-a-half hours at the face.] It would leave seven-and-a-half hours, but I consider that they take very much longer intervals than the half hour for breakfast.

(6483.) [Is there any other observation that you would like to make on the legislative limitation of the hours.] I think one view of the question is this: one must look at it thus, that in all the districts the hours have adjusted themselves in different districts in the country in order to meet the different conditions, and it appears to me that if an eight hours' day is legislated for it will affect different districts in different ways, and the result of that might be in some cases prohibitive; and I think that it is not at all improbable that certain districts would really wish to revert to what may be a half hour longer, or, an hour longer, and in that case it would be difficult to deal with that by repealing the eight

hours' day or doing away with the eight hours' day without special legislation; so that if the eight hours' day is got by legislation it appears to me that the Government would really have to interfere with all questions arising in the future with regard to trade.

(6484.) [You think that a legislative limit to, say, eight hours, or at any rate a uniform number of hours, would not have that elasticity which the varying circumstances of different districts render desirable?] Just so.

(6525.) [Do you express the views of your association on that question?] Quite so, with regard to the increase of cost.

(6526.) [Do you know the views of the miners themselves on that question?] It is a very difficult question to answer. Of course the representatives of the Union are very much in favour of an eight hours' day. All the union men would be in favour of an eight hours' day, so far as we can hear expression of their views; but I am not at all sure that that is the feeling of a great many of the men. I think that we hear more of the expression of the men through the Union than is arrived at by individual opinion. I may say this, that many men, without any leading questions at all, have expressed their opinion to me that there is no object in an eight hours' day, and that they cannot see the meaning of it.

(6532.) [Supposing, by legislative enactment, you were now to make those hours uniform, would not the economic effect be exactly as if the legislature were to fix different rates of wages in the different districts. Let me explain myself more clearly. You start now with differences, but those differences equalise the balance of advantage and disadvantage in other respects. If now you alter that balance by establishing an artificial uniformity of hours, would not the economical effect be the same as that of deter-

mining the rates of wages in different parts of the country, fixing them for part of the country at one rate and another part of it at another rate?]—Yes, I think it it would, because whatever the advantages were, if you were to legislate for an eight hours' day, then you might legislate for a rate of wages to adjust itself to the various ways in which the different districts had been prejudiced by the eight hours' day.

(6534.) [You disturb it by insisting upon uniformity of hours all over the country?] Certainly.

(6535.) [You would disturb it in the same way by arbitrary changes in the present rates of wages?] I think it would be equivalent to that.

(6536.) [Are there collieries in your district which would be prejudiced by a legislative eight hours' day, so greatly as to make is necessary to close them?] There are one or two, even at the present time, that are very nearly being closed. I do not know that I could say positively that any one of them that are represented in the association would positively close, but if we had the same depression of trade and the same time of depression that we had from 1876 until comparatively recently, then I consider that several collieries would be closed.

MR. WILLIAM FAIRLEY:—

(6710.) I am a Mining engineer, residing at Rugely, in Staffordshire.

(6711.) I am a Fellow of the Geological Society, Vice-President of the National Association of Colliery Managers, and have acted as mineral agent to the Marquis of Anglesey during the last 13 years.

(6742-5.) [What are the hours of underground men?] Nine hours down the pit. Nine hours from bank to bank. One shift of men of all classes, except the repairers at night.

(6789–90.) [I think you desire to offer some evidence as to the effect of a compulsory eight hours' Bill? Yes; the effect would be generally to shorten the day by one hour—that is the winding of coal by one hour—and, as has been already shown, the actual time worked at the face is now only about seven-and-a-quarter hours. This would leave the working shift six-and-a-quarter hours, and would also reduce the hours available for winding coal to seven hours, and as most of the pits are fairly occupied during the whole of the time the effect would be to reduce the output, and consequently the miners' wages, where they work by the piece, by at least 12 per cent. The hours now worked are reasonable, and do not exhaust a man as did the long hours (10 and 12) formerly worked. A proof of this is seen in this district, where many of the miners are also small farmers or crofters, and are able to and do work on their land for hours after they leave the colliery. During the 20 years which have passed since the hours were reduced very great improvements have been made in colliery winding and hauling machinery, and the improvements in these respects have been very marked in North Staffordshire, and no doubt the increased facilities for winding the coal, and the application of mechanical contrivances, are the principal reasons why the average get per man has been so much increased. Even if it were possible for the men to do the same amount of work in an hour's less time, the attempt would do them more harm than the fair and reasonable hours now worked. Many of the men now voluntarily work overtime occasionally in their working places to do their packing, timber drawing, and other work,

which cannot be done without interfering with the coal getting, and it would be unjust to such men, who are generally the steady and regular workers, to limit their hours and consequently their wages. The liability to accident would be greatly increased if the men were working against time, which probably would be the case if the eight hours were enforced by Act. I have a table here which shows the general alterations from February 14th, 1881, down to August the 6th, 1890, when the last 5 per cent. advance was given.

(6817.) [You say that of an eight hours' day would be to diminish output, and to reduce wages by about 12 per cent.; what is the attitude of the men towards the question of a legal eight hours' day?] I do not hear any of them desiring to bring about any eight hours' day.

(6818.) [They have made no representations to the owners?] No, I have never heard any of them express any desire to bring it about; they do not seem to wish for it, in fact. I have never heard any of them express a wish to have it.

(6820.) [Do you consider that an eight hours' day, the primary effect of which would be, as you say, to reduce wages, would bring about a greater regularity of attendance to compensate for that reduction?] I cannot say. It would have the effect of decreasing the production, as it would be taking off 12½ per cent. of the time of winding.

(6821.) [But could not that decrease of output be made up by greater regularity of attendance if the men worked shorter hours, but worked more days?] Well, that might be so.

(6822.) [You have not considered, however, whether one effect would balance the other?] I have not considered that, but that might be so.

(6853.) [Could you give us an idea as to the increased cost that you think the collieries in your district would be put to by the establishment of eight hours instead of the present working hours ?] The effect would be, I should say, to diminish the output by 12½ per cent., and the standing charges would all be the same; and, to arrive at that, you would have to divide the total charges by the diminished quantity of 12½ per cent. What that would amount to it is difficult to say.

(6854.) [Would not your repairs increase greatly ?] There would be a natural increase in the breakage of the roof. You are working an hour less; your face is advancing more slowly, and there would be an increase in timbering, and so on.

(6855.) There would be no increase of safety; a diminution in the safety, I should think.

(6864.) [Do you consider that the hours now worked in the district you represent are injurious to the health of the workpeople ?] No, I think not.

(6865.) [That being so, would you think it right or otherwise to debar a man from working that length of hours ?] I think it should be optional to the men.

(6880.) [Do you think it would not very materially assist the colliery proprietor and regulate competition if there were some regularly fixed period of employment instead of one district being seven hours, and another seven hours and a half, another eight, and another nine hours a day ?] I do not know exactly how that would be. The circumstances of every coal field that I have been in are so different that one system might not apply well all through the different districts. It has always been an eight hours' system in the North of England since I have known anything about it. When I was a lad I worked eight hours down a

pit, and up to this day they are working eight hours a shift—that is, the shifters. It is precisely the same now as it was 40 years ago in the county of Durham. There is no difference whatever, that I know of, as regards the hours.

(6881.) [Did you think that long enough at that time?] It was long enough for me.

Mr. JOHN PUXLEY WHITE (9th December, 1891).

(7176–7.) I am the chairman and managing director of the South Leicestershire Colliery Company, Limited, and have occupied those positions since the formation of the company, 17 years ago.

(7178.) Am also agent to the Snibston Colliery Company, Coalville, near Leicester, and have been connected with that company for a period of 39 years.

(7201.) The ordinary hours of labour vary from eight and a half to nine hours in our particular colliery. We have an eight hours turning for five days a week, the collieries being open nine hours, and the men having half an hour for what is called snap.

(7202.) [Will you describe a little more exactly the hour of the day at which the men begin to descend the pit?] That varies according to the season of the year, sometimes it is at six, sometimes it is at half-past six; if they begin at six, they leave off half an hour earlier in the afternoon.

(7203-6.) [We will suppose that they begin to go down at six?] They leave off at 10 for snap; they resume half an hour afterwards, and leave off at three. That is, the hours are from six to three. They begin to descend at six, and they begin to ride up the shaft at three.

(7207.) [They have had half an hour's suspension ?] Yes, for snap.

(7208-9.) In the winter time we generally work five days a week; in summer from three to four.

(7267.) [You have given, I believe, some consideration to the question of Parliament being asked to limit the hours of adult labour to eight hours from bank to bank ?] Yes.

(7268.) [Perhaps rather more with reference to underground workmen; what is your view on that subject ?] I think it would be a very great mistake.

(7269.) [Would you give some reason for that view ?] The reason for that view is that they very rarely in our district work more than eight hours to-day, but if you have Parliament interfering with adults the time may come when they may order them to work 10 or 11 hours. I do not see why we should not legislate for one the same as the other.

(7270.) [You say they do not work more than eight hours, but, of course, the question is the number of hours below ground ?] Yes.

(7271.) [They are now nine hours below ground ?] Yes, nine hours for five days a week; less than that on the sixth day.

(7272.) [Then the question put to you rather is what would be the effect, do you think, upon your trade of all classes of men being limited to eight hours below ground ?] In the coal trade generally throughout this district it would reduce the output, very considerably in some cases; it depends very much upon how far the face of the coal is from the shaft bottom.

(7291.) There is a general opinion in Leicestershire, South Derbyshire, and Warwickshire, that eight hours coal

drawing, actual coal turning, not eight hours' work, bank to bank, would be satisfactory.

(7292.) [Over how many hours does coal drawing now extend ?] 8½ hours in a day of nine hours. We work nine hours; the coal drawing extends to 8½ hours, and, I say, if we could actually work eight hours coal drawing per day it would be satisfactory to coalowners; that is, for every day they can find work for the men.

(7331.) I object to the interference of Parliament in adult labour.

(7333-5.) [But you would not object to an arrangement by which the present 8½ hours of work should be changed to an eight hours day?] Personally, I should not. For coal-drawing including snap; they must get their snap as best they can in that case. At present, half-an-hour is set apart for snap.

(7336.) If this change was made, then the men would have to get their snap as best they could?

(7337.) [Now, the Chairman asked you whether it would not be possible, supposing an eight hours day were worked, to make up for the loss of time by working an increased number of days in the pit?] Yes. That may be answered in this way, that if you work less coal in a day's turn, and you have plenty of orders, it would necessitate your working an additional day in the week, but it is not always that you have got the orders to turn sufficient for another day.

(7338.) I do not quite follow that last reply; do you mean that if there was to be any increase in the days you would have to increase the work one day in each week?] Yes, that is so.

(7387.) [Then I understand from you, as speaking not

only for yourself, but for the coal owners whom you represent, although there would be an objection to eight hours from bank to bank, they would raise no objection to the reduction of the hours to eight hours coal drawing ?] I think that is so. I know that represents the views of a great many of the owners in the Association.

(7530.) At present eight hours and a half is the number; five days a week.

(7531.) Although I object to legislative interference, I would not object to its being reduced to eight hours by taking away the half hour for meals.

(7532.) [Have you considered the effect that it might have on a colliery which had workings two or three miles from the bottom of the pit ?] Yes, I have.

(7533.) [What would be the effect ?] A very considerable reduction in the output.

(7534.) [Do you propose, in your answer, that everybody should be obliged to be up at the end of the eight hours, or that it should apply to hewers only ?] Eight hours working time—eight hours coal turning.

(7535.) Drawing, actual winding, I mean.

(7536.) [Then would they all have to be up within that eight hours, do you mean ?] No.

MR. FREDERICK CHANNER CORFIELD.

(7626.) I have been connected with the Butterley Company, who are owners of large collieries and iron works in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Staffordshire for the last 25 years.

(7627.) For the last 12 years of the period I have been and am still the general manager of the whole of the Butterley company's collieries in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

(7628.) About 3,500 persons are employed in these collieries of the Butterley company.

(7695.) Have you any observations to make with regard to an eight hours compulsory day ?] I think Parliament ought not to be asked to legislate for adult labour. I think that the time worked throughout the year is generally short enough, seeing that in the district I represent, which is nearly all soft coal, or house coal, the term is not more than three to four days per wrek actual work in the colliery now. If you had a regulation of eight hours from bank to bank, it would not be to the safety of the men or to the safety of the proprietor's interest in the mine. The tendency would be for the men to come out of the workings almost without taking time to leave their working places in a safe state. I think that in large collieries, where it takes a long time to turn the men down, also a long time to turn them up again, also a long time to go from the pit bottom to their working place and back again, the actual time worked at the pit would not be much more than from six to six and a half hours a day actual work at a colliery of that kind. If you have shorter hours, it must tend very much to reduce the output, and such reduced output must necessarily enhance the cost of working, and then if the cost is greater the colliery owner will have to charge the public more for their coal—supposing they get a fair remuneration now for their commodity. Then it would also reduce the power of the collier to earn, and if there was a good trade, and there was an opportunity of making a lot of money, this Bill would upset the opportunity of their earning more money. These are some of the principal difficulties that we have talked over.

(7727.) [When you speak of 6½ hours as being the present working time, do you mean that as an average in the face?] I did not mean that that was what was taking place now, what I meant was that if the eight hours bank-to-bank Bill became law the men would not work more than that time at the face.

(7728.) [What would be their present hours in the face—actual working?] Of course that 6½ hours was more of an average. It depends very much upon the size of colliery and the power of the engine to bring the men up in a certain time. It would vary in almost every colliery, I should think, in England.

(7794.) [You said just now, if the eight hour day was established, that the actual work in the face, and the average in your district, would be about 6½ hours?] Something like that.

(7797-8.) [Then, would you be able to tell us what, in your opinion, would be the extra cost of working, owing to the adoption of an eight hour day as against the present system?] I could not say how much it actually would be, but it would be more, considerable more.

(7799.) [Do you think that would have effect upon the competitive power of collieries in your district?] I think it would have, because it would restrict the output at a time, probably, when the books were full of orders in the winter time.

(7800.) [Do you think it would possibly lead to some of the more expensive collieries being closed?] Quite possibly. In fact, I should think it would close some of the collieries.

Mr. FREDERICK PARKER RHODES:—

(7829-30.) I am a solicitor practising at Rotherham, and hold several public appointments there, and, among others,

I am the Secretary of the South Yorkshire Coalowners' Association. I attend here as such secretary by the direction and on behalf of that association.

(7850-1.) [What are the average hours of the collier from bank to bank?] I got that out as carefully as I could, in order to make a return to the Board of Trade and also to your Commission, and the average hours from bank to bank are eight. It is eight hours and eight minutes really from bank to bank.

(7852-3.) [And what are the average hours of the other underground men?] Other underground men vary from the lowest I would put at eight, up to the longest, say, at ten. And you would find that about nine hours was a fair average to take for underground labour other than the hewer and his trammer or filler.

(7854.) The class of men who would be down 10 hours, are men who attend to the roadway, and men of that class.

(7868.) [Have you or has your association given special consideration to the suggestion for a compulsory working day of eight hours from bank to bank?] I think myself that the effect of it of necessity must be to reduce the output. I have heard it stated and stated strongly, that that would not be the case; but I have not been able to follow the arguments adduced in support of that proposition, for this reason, that at present, as appears from the return, the hewers work about eight hours a day, but other classes of labour work on an average nine. If, therefore, you reduce those other classes of labour by one hour, and bring them to eight, you must of necessity sacrifice to a certain extent the useful drawing effect of the pit for the day. In other words, to my mind, the solution of the problem, as to whether it would result in the restriction of output or not depends on whether the drawing power of the pit for the day would be affected or whether it would not.

(7869.) [Was your association a party to certain conferences which took place in London on 21st January and the 11th February last?] Yes; Mr. Maskell Peace and myself acted as joint secretaries for the owners during these conferences.

(7870.) [Do you propose to put in the official memoranda that were exchanged between the parties?] I think it would be useful to do so; because at those conferences, for there were two, one on the 21st January and another on the 11th February, the men put in their case in the shape of a written statement, and that case set out the demand they made, and the reasons they adduced in support of it. The owners took time to consider, and, at the meeting on the 11th February, they on their part put in their reply to that statement, in which they adduced the reasons which appeared to them to negative the arguments that were put forward by the men.

(7871.) [Those two documents then may be deemed to represent the views of both parties?] Of the two parties at that time, the districts that were represented at that conference were the various districts of England, with the exception of the North of England and with the exception of South Wales. I am not quite correct there. I was thinking of our own side of the case, and the reply is so far accurate, but Mr. Chambers reminds me that on the part of the men, representatives were present from South Wales and also from Scotland; but there were not representatives from those districts on our side.

(7885.) [Then, practically, in your district you have eight hours?] For the hewers, to all intent and purposes, that is so, if you take the average.

(7886.) [Is there not a very general feeling among the miners in South Yorkshire for a legislative eight hours?] I

am bound to say that the leaders of the men appear to be unanimous in favour of it.

(7887.) [Are not the men unanimous?] I have no means of telling that. I can tell you this: I have not heard any expression of opinion to the contrary from the men.

(7888.) [We can apply another test: is it not rather notorious that it is a test question electorally in South Yorkshire?] It is.

(7889.) [That nobody has a chance there unless he is prepared to vote for the eight hours?] No, I do not think he would have.

(7890.) [How do you explain that strong feeling for legislative interference in South Yorkshire, if practically they have the eight hours for the hewers, and there is only, as I understand you, a very small addition for the other men?] The demand for the eight hours, as set forth in the men's manifesto, which I have handed in, is not an eight hours' day for the hewers, but an eight hours' day for all who ride the rope; that is, for all who go down the pit, of whatever class. Now I can only judge as to the reason why they ask it from the reasons that they set forth in their statement, and those reasons are these; They say first that the hours are too long, and that the nature of the work is laborious and exhaustive; that there are more men killed and permanently disabled in that trade than in any other; that shortening the hours would exhaust the men less, and would render them better fitted to carry out their work; and would ensure on that ground greater safety to the men. That is shortly the way in which they put it.

(7891.) [Assume that there was a legislative eight hours day, applying to all men underground, how much would that reduce on an average the labour of the man who is hewing the coal?] It would reduce his labour on the average; it would bring him to less than eight.

(7892.) [My question is, how much ?] It would be difficult to say under those circumstances, because, of course, then if you had a fixed limit of eight hours, you would have the strongest possible efforts made to make both classes of labour run together as far as you could, and so it would not be quite fair to argue proportionately from the present difference.

(7893.) [Would that result in the reduction of the hours of the hewer?] It would follow as a matter of course, but it would not arise from that in the first instance. It would arise from this. That whereas at present your pit winds nine or ten hours to draw out the produce of eight hours of hewing, if you reduce the hours of winding, you, of necessity, reduce the power of the pit to wind, and therefore the hewer will have to go short.

(7894.) [As I understood you just now to say, it would be so small an amount of difference that you could hardly tell?] I did not quite say that. I certainly did not intend to say it. I said it would be very difficult to say what the exact difference would be, because there would be an endeavour on all sides to keep to the new conditions, and lessen check of production.

(7895.) [Would there be improved methods of drawing?] No. In most of our large collieries. I do not think that that would meet it. It is not so much a question of drawing; it is the question of getting the material to the pit bottom with regularity, as it is wanted to draw. Take the case, for instance, of a colliery working by endless rope. The rope travels at the rate of, say, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour. Now that rope is continually moving up to the pit bottom, and the amount of the output depends upon the means that are devised for bringing all that coal gradually on to that rope, and getting it evenly to the pit bottom just as it is wanted.

(7896.) [And that could not be re-adjusted by means of working in shifts, could it?] If you went in for working in

shifts then you would have another difficulty—that working in shifts would, of necessity, either practically halve the output for one shift, or it would mean double the labour in two shifts.

(7897.) [I mean double the labour in two shifts?] There is not the labour.

(7898.) [You could not do it?] No.

(7899.) [You have not sufficient colliers?] No.

(7902.) [Does the statement which is published in the proceedings of the joint conference represent the whole of your case, or would you like to add anything to it?] I could add something to it if I sat down with pen and ink. We prepared that under some little pressure, for we had to postpone our meeting. I think it might be strengthened; but it is a fair statement of the principal grounds.

(7945.) The great difference between us and the men is as to the question of principle. They ask for parliamentary interference to limit the hours of labour. It is that great principle that was objected to by the owners. There has never been any negotiations as to the establishment of an eight hours' day other than compulsorily.

(7946.) If the men would open up negotiations with the employers in that district, to have an eight hours' day established by conciliatory means—by amicable settlement, and without legislation, do you think that the employers would concede it?] I can only say this: that if a demand of that kind were made, it would be my duty, of course, to submit it to the employers, and they would have to consider it. They never have considered it.

(7947.) Do you think they would have the same objection then as they have now to legislation?] I cannot say; but, speaking for myself, if I were a coalowner, I should not.

(7948.) [So, after all, then, the difficulties to be surmounted with respect to an equal production of coal are not very great?] I may be wrong, and I am open to correction, but from my point of view, a very small restriction in the outpot of coal would have a very serious effect on the trade. The presence power of production and the present demand are, undoubtedly, very nearly equal; and, therefore, it would not be safe to say that a small difference in the output would be an insignificant matter; it might be a very serious matter.

(7949.) [Is it the fact that the men ask for eight hours by legislation, or the probability of reducing the output, that is the real difficulty in the way of establishing the eight hours?] There are two difficulties. First of all, as a matter of principle, the owners object to a limitation of the hours of adult labour by Act of Parliament, and secondly, they point out that if that principle were adopted, it would result in a restriction of the output; and, of course, if the adoption of that principle resulted in a restriction of the output, so also would the arriving at the same arrangement by agreement result in a restriction of output.

Mr. FREDERICK PARKER RHODES (10th December, 1891.)

(7973.) [The statement put forward on behalf of the owners at the joint conference consists of replies, point by point, to the representations of the men?] That is so.

(7974.) [I see in the account of the proceedings of the conferance that Mr. Pickard, on behalf of the men, states it as his opinion that the output would not be diminished by a legal eight hours day; do you know whether the contrary opinion has not sometimes been expressed by the leaders of the men?] I should not like to say that it has.

(7975.) [You have not heard it contended on their behalf that though the output would be probably reduced, the price of coal would be in consequence raised, and that that higher price would compensate both the owners and the men for the diminished output?] Yes, I have seen that statement put forward, but I should not like to say that it was put forward by one of the leaders of the men in my own particular district. Certainly I have seen that statemont made.

(7976.) [Have you heard it further contended on behalf of the men that such a change would relieve the districts which are now working short hours from unfair competition?] Yes.

(7977.) [I presume that no such relief could be obtained unless the output were reduced by reducing the hours?] I do not see how it could.

(7978.) You yourself, at all events, are convinced that, as a matter of fact, the output would be reduced?] Yes. I should like, if you will allow me, perhaps, to qualify that to some extent. When I said that yesterday I was speaking of the immediate effect of such a change, but it is open to great doubt whether that change would be permanent. I think, myself, that what would occur would be this, that at first you would undoubtedly restrict the output, that would be equivalent to a corresponding increase in demand; that would mean a rising price produced by artificial causes; that again undoubtedly would bring capital into a trade which, for the moment, was artificially profitable, and you would have in that way by the opening of fresh pits an increase in output. That would go on until demand and supply were equal, and then bad trade would come again as we have had it before. When that occurred, then, in my judgment, the artificial system would break down. You would have staved off the operation of the natnral laws as long as you could, and you would then have a calamitous

condition of trade when it would be almost impossible to maintain an artificial restriction which depended for its maintenance on the prevention of a man from doing what he liked with his own labour.

(7979.) [Then I understand that in your view the sequence of events would be this; first of all, output would be reduced?] I think so.

(7980.) [Secondly, prices would rise and wages might rise with them?] Yes.

(7981.) [Next, the demand would be lessened by the rise of price?] Yes.

(7982.) [And at the same time foreign competition would be stimulated?] Yes, and stimulated most in the markets where our power of supply and their power of supply are most nearly balanced.

(7983.) [Now if when that point was reached the high prices could not be maintained a certain number of collieries would, I presume, have to be closed?] Yes. What you would have at first would be this: you would have collieries gradually beginning, as demand slackened, to run short time, and that would go on till the doctrine of the survival of the fittest had had time to take effect. But in the meantime you would have every colliery prolonging its existence as long as it could, working, perhaps, two or three days a week, and then, as I say, to my mind, would come the great difficulty of maintaining the artificial restriction that you had created.

(7984.) [And would you further add, that supposing you could maintain high prices you would be injuring those industries which depend upon coal, and that that injury would in time react upon the coal trade itself?] Yes. My view is this: that although it would be very pleasant for us

to regard the matter from our own point of view, and simply regulate the thing with a view to what it would bring into our own pockets; it is impossible for us to disregard the general public, because although we are a necessity for the general public, and they cannot do without us; still, on the other hand, the consumption by the general public is an equal necessity for us. Experience shows that high prices undoubtedly check demand. I believe that is a proposition which as a matter of logic and of economic law cannot be gainsaid. If, therefore, you raise the price unduly you must to some extent, sooner or later, check the demand for the article for which you are charging the increased figure.

(7992.) [In your view the ultimate effect upon the trade generally, including both the owners and the miners, of a legislative eight hours' day would be bad?] I think so.

(7993.) [That is speaking for the industry as a whole?] I think so.

(7994.) [Now I will ask you one or two questions as to the effect of such a measure upon the various districts of the country. As between the different districts of the country would the operation of a uniform eight hours' day affect all districts equally?] No, and to my mind that is one of the great difficulties in its application. Districts vary; they vary in their customs, they vary in their hours of work, and they vary in their modes of work. For instance, compare the north of England and my own district: in the north of England you have the hewers working a much shorter shift than that which is asked for now, and you have the other classes of labour working a longer shift. The hewers are at full liberty to do nothing else except get their coal; the timbering is all done by a separate class of persons who are paid for it. Now in our own district the hewer does his own timbering; it is part of his work; and instead of having a double shift of hewers and a single shift of other men in our

district we have a single shift system applied to both. Now I cannot see how it is possible by a Parliamentary enactment to bring those two districts into line without inflicting injury or hardship upon one or the other.

(7995.) [So that the introduction of such a measure as is proposed would disturb the existing balance of economic advantage and disadvantage?] I cannot see how it could be avoided.

(7996.) [In such a way as to injure some districts and possibly benefit other districts at the expense of the injured districts?] Possibly.

(7997.) [Now do you consider that such a disturbance of the existing economic conditions can properly be described as a relief of those districts which are now working short hours from unfair competition?] No, I think that such a disturbance of the economic conditions of the district must of necessity to a greater or less extent injuriously affect all districts because the trade of each district has grown up in consequence of the particular economic conditions which exist in it. The north of England trade is carried on in the way that it is done by means of the particular state of circumstances which exist there, and which has produced and given rise to the trade. So also with regard to Lancashire; so also with regard to Yorkshire; and although you might say that you gave relief from unfair competition I am afraid myself that you would give hardship in another way.

(7998.) [In short, you think that a state of things has grown up naturally which it would be unfair now arbitrarily to disturb?] Yes, and extremely difficult. I do not know of anything more difficult than to alter a particular custom, even a trivial one, which has grown up and become part of the life of a district.

(7999.) [I gather from the statement put forward at the

conference by Mr. Pickard that he attaches extreme importance to the question of uniformity. I think he goes so far as to say that unless the eight hours' day was secured by legal action, it would not be desirable for the miners in any one district to take it at all. The words are these, "Unless "such is the case," that is to say, unless legislative sanction is given to the proposed change, "it would be utterly im- "possible for us to take it, as our great object is to secure a "uniform eight hours' day for the underground toilers in the "United Kingdom?] Yes, and I quite understood his point; he would not want to inflict injury, for instance, on his own district and his own men, or to handicap them unless all other districts were treated alike.

(8000.) [But is that consistent with his other statement that the output would not be diminished?] That last is an assertion only, and it is impossible to argue on an assertion unless you have the reasons for it.

(8001.) [But you do not regard the two statements as consistent?] No, I do not.

(8002.) [In your opinion, in view of the disturbance of economical conditions that might arise, is this uniformity a thing so desirable that Parliament ought to be asked to depart from the principles on which it has hitherto acted in order to secure it for adult miners?] Personally, I think that nothing but absolute national necessity would justify Parliament saying to an adult male that he shall not do what he likes and thinks best for himself with his own labour. As an individual I have the strongest possible opinion with regard to it.

(8003.) [Is it your opinion that elasticity and freedom are what we should aim at rather than uniformity in a matter of this description?] I think so. I think that trades are like men, and that in order to get on and to live,

they must adapt themselves to the varying circumstances that arise from time to time.

(8004.) [Do you think it possible to separate the question of hours from the question of wages?]—I have heard that debated a great deal, and I have listened very carefully to what has been said with regard to it, but I cannot myself get out of my mind that if you do less work, you get less money. I find it so in my own case, and I do not see myself how it is possible for anyone to reduce the amount of time he works, without, at the same time reducing his remuneration—that is in the long run. I do not know at first whether that would be the case or not for the reasons that we have been discussing. But in the long run my view is that less work means less earning power.

(8005.) [And do you not think it even more important for a man to be able to earn enough to keep his family in comfort than for him to reduce the hours which he now works from ten or nine to eight?] Yes. I put it this way. I think that it is a very grave thing indeed to say to an able-bodied man that he shall not earn if he chooses to do so.

(8006.) [Now, do you think, supposing the economic conditions in any given district were to allow of it that the coal owners would be averse to granting an eight hours' day?] Do you mean by arrangement?

(8007.) By arrangement?] That I cannot say, because that question has never yet been discussed by the owners; they have only discussed the demand as it was put forward, and of course with regard to that I am simply here as their mouthpiece speaking upon their mandate.

(8017.) I think you said that the hours of labour were for hewers practically eight, and for others from nine to ten in your district of South Yorkshire?] Yes, about nine I think would be the average with us for the latter.

(1018.) [Do you find that that length of time is injurious to the health of the people?] I do not think so. I think you will find in that statement that I handed in which was put forward by the owners that they give statistics there given from the reports of the Registrar General as to the average mortality in different classes of labour. You will find there, I think, that the reverse of that proposition is shown to be the case.

(8019.) [That being so would you think it prudent or otherwise to compulsorily restrict the hours of labour?] No, I do not think so. I would say this at once without hesitation, that if it were proved and shown that the hours of labour were such as to injuriously affect health, that would be the most cogent argument in favour of parliamentary interference.

(8022.) [I think you said that a reduction to eight hours would necessarily decrease the output?] I think it would myself; that is my opinion.

(8023.) [That being so, have you considered what the effect would be upon the cost of production?] No, it is very difficult to get at that, because in order to arrive at the effect on the cost of production, you would have to ascertain exactly what the percentage of reduction in output would be, and that is a sum which admits of so much argument that it would be very difficult to work it out accurately; but undoubtedly it would increase the cost of production.

(8024.) [Supposing that the output were reduced the standing charges remaining the same the cost per ton would be increased more or less?] Certainly.

(8025.) [With regard to the effect of the eight hours, do you not think it would have an injurious effect upon the home trade?] Undoubtedly it would disturb the balance of power between the respective districts.

(8026.) Leaving out the question of balance of power we use coal in all our manufactures.

(8027.) [And we largely export. If it would injure our export trade in coal, would not the increased cost to the manufacturer and to the exporter injure the general trade, and affect not only the coal trade abroad, but the trade at home?] I think it would. It has been put in this way: that an increase of 6d. or 1s. per ton in price would not hurt anybody very much, one way or the other. Well, one is inclined upon first sight to say that it would not, but I do not think that you can get over the operation of the economic law, that increase in price undoubtedly tends to check consumption; a slight increase less than a large increase, but undoubtedly it operates.

(8029.) [But would not the immediate result of the eight hours be to reduce the output and increase the cost and to lessen the purchasing power of the money?] Yes; but in what I was saying before I was assuming the case of the other side for a moment—making them a present of their case and assuming that it would result in a benefit to all parties at the present time. As a matter of fact, I do not think that is correct, because as against the temporarily increased price you have to set the increased cost.

(8030.) [Then you entirely agree that the result would be injurious to our home trade so far as manufacturers are concerned?] I think so.

(8060.) [But is it not possible, even assuming the eight hours were applied on the continent as well as here, that the introduction of the eight hours here might mean to us a much larger difference than on the continent?] Possibly.

(8061.) [Assuming, for instance, that on the continent the average cost of putting coal on the pit bank is 6s., but the average cost here, we will say, is 7s., 10 per cent. on the

one is one figure, 10 per cent. on the other is another figure, so that we may suffer more by the introduction of the eight hours than even they would on the continent?] That is so. I had for the moment lost sight of that result.

Mr. ARTHUR MARSHALL CHAMBERS:—

(8062 3.) I am the managing director of the firm of Newton, Chambers & Co., Limited, of the Thornicliffe Iron Works and Collieries, South Yorkshire. I am also the president of the Mining Association of Great Britain, and filled that office last year also; but I wish to say that I do not appear on behalf of the Mining Association of Great Britain. I simply appear for the South Yorkshire Coal Owners' Association.

(8067.) With respect to the eight hours's question, I may say that our collieries furnish an instance in which any enactment of a legal eight hours' day would differently affect different pits. For instance, we have several pits by which the men are let down by winding engines in the ordinary manner; and we have other pits which are driven from the day, by what are called day drifts or day holes, where the men walk down. The distance which they have to travel underground in the one case is much greater than in the other, although the distance from their own homes to their places of work may not be any further. So that, with respect to those colieries where the men have to walk from the day underground, the eight hours would have a very much more serious effect than it would have in those pits in which they are let down by winding engines.

(8068.) [You mean that if there were a perpendicular shaft sunk at the point or near the point where the men would get to work they would be walking on the surface to that shaft, instead of as at present walking underground?]

That is so; and that is the case with regard to a considerable number of collieries in the district, showing how unequally such an arrangement would apply. As a matter of fact, in the collieries where we let the men down by means of the winding engine, they are in from surface to surface a less time than they are in those collieries where they have to walk. It may be said, with regard to those in which they have to walk from the surface, that they are really less liable to accident than they are in the collieries where the means of ingress and egress is by the winding engine. These different circumstances mean that it would put many of the collieries of that class at a very great disadvantage.

(8069-70.) [Before leaving that point, will you tell us how the present regulations of hours apply to the collier who descends a shaft, or to the collier who descends a drift mouth. Does each enter the earth at the same time?] No, in the case of men who walk down the drifts they usually, if they go at the same time, return perhaps half-an-hour or an hour later than the men who are let down by the winding shift.

(8071.) [The time of each class is not the same, reckoned in the case of the man who descends the shaft from the time he proceeds to do so and reckoned in the case of the man who enters the drift mouth from the time he does so enter it?] No, it is not the same.

(8072.) [It is longer in the latter case?] It is longer in the latter case. Then with regard to the effect of the eight hours upon the method of working which is prevalent in the Midland and Yorkshire districts, at all events in the South Yorkshire district, the fact is that the off-hand workers—the day men—are employed from nine to ten hours underground. The effect of a compulsory eight hours would be that these men would have to come out at the end of eight hours, and the hewers would have their time reduced to probably seven, and a considerable decrease of

output would ensue. Then another effect would be this: in that district most of the coal is worked on the long wall system, and in the long wall system the whole of the men employed in the face are responsible more or less for the timbering and the packing, and for any sudden difficulty that may arise. Possibly after they have been working six hours what is known technically as a weight may come on. In that case, if the men were required to return to the surface just to make up their exact eight hours, there might possibly be a fall of roof, an interference with the faces, and a stoppage of the ventilation; and therefore the operation of any compulsory time would lead to more danger and to considerably more expense in working the coal.

(8073.) [May I understand that that implies that at present cases are not infrequent when men, from some such cause, have to remain longer than the ordinary appointed hour?] That is so; and when they go down they do not know in what condition they will find their working places at the end of the shift. The system of working in the Midland district is very different from what exists in the North of England, where the pillar and stall system is prevalent.

(8074.) [The force of the point you have just made lies in this, as I understand, that at present, whilst there are the ordinary hours which have been described by Mr. Parker Rhodes, there is elasticity, inasmuch as if any underground conditions, more especially of safety, call for a man to remain a little longer he can and does do so?] That is so.

(8075.) [But that under the other system there would be a hard-and-fast line?] There would be a hard-and-fast line which would be, in my opinion, a source of continual danger and possibly disaster. I quite agree with the evidence of Mr. Rhodes with respect to the effect of the eight hours' system on the decrease in the production of coal, because in

most of our large collieries the machinery is employed for from nine to ten hours to its full capacity, and any compulsory eight hours would inevitably lead to a reduction, in my opinion, of from 20 to 25 per cent. I would also point out that the off-hand labour, as a rule, is much less arduous and exacting than that of the miner and the trammer. The men employed on the roads have not to work so hard, and they can work without any inconvenience for the time which is usually established in the district.

(8076.) [It seems more convenient, perhaps, that you should yourself initiate the points on which you desire to supplement Mr. Rhodes' evidence. Will you proceed therefore?] I would say that the system in Yorkshire of paying the hewer by the piece causes him to work to the full extent of his capacity, and I may also say that the men throughout the district are a strong and healthy class of men, and so far as I can judge do not suffer at all from overwork, though undoubtedly they are subject to accidents and to the other conditions of this class of labour.

(8077.) [Are you speaking of the hewers generally?] Yes. They are a very strong and healthy class of men, and I do not think the hours of labour at all interfere with their general health and comfort. I do not think they could possibly increase their output per hour if their time was reduced. For instance, they now work in the face about seven to seven and a half hours, and during that time my experience in seeing them work frequently, and what I have heard, leads me to believe that they work as hard as they possibly can, and that if you cut an hour off their work you will cut an hour off the quantity of coal, a seventh off the quantity of coal which they could produce.

(8085.) [Mr. Rhodes has explained to the Committee how a uniform eight hours' day would unequally affect different districts, and your evidence goes to show that it

would also very unequally affect different pits?] That is so.

(8088.) [So that the effect of a uniform eight hours Act would be not only unfavourably to prejudice some districts as against others, and some collieries as against others, but also some men as against others?] Quite so.

(8091.) [So that to establish a uniformity in hours would not be really to establish a uniformity in the amount of work done?] It would not.

(8092.) [Now with regard to the diminution of output, supposing it to be true, as you think, that the output would be diminished by some 20 per cent. that would immediately raise the price?] No doubt.

(8093.) [I presume that that rise of price would tempt capital into the trade as one of its first effects?] Yes, that would be one effect.

(8094.) [If more capital was engaged in the trade it would have to be by the opening of new mines, would it not?] Yes.

(8095.) [Could that capital be applied simply to the development of the existing mines?] It could to some extent.

(8096.) [But in order to keep up the supply, practically more mines would have to be opened and more capital expended in doing so?] Yes. With regard to many pits that are now open there are, for instance, seams which are thin which at present are not able to be worked profitably but which might be opened out if a considerable rise of price took place. That is the same thing really, but it would not mean the expenditure of so large an extra capital as the opening out of a new coalfield.

(8097.) [In any case an additional amount of capital would have to be sunk?] No doubt.

(8098.) [You would also require an additional amount of skilled labour ?] That would be so.

(8099.) [Is that skilled labour available at the present time ?] It is not.

(8100.) [Would that be an additional difficulty in the way of maintaining the present output ?] It would.

(8122.) [Briefly, is the objection to the establishment of an eight hours' day really against the establishment of a day of eight hours, or only against its establishment by legislation ?] I have no hesitation in giving you my own opinion, which I think is probably shared in by most of the other coal owners. We object to it on principle, and we object to it on the ground of expediency, and because we consider it would largely increase the cost, and do ultimate damage to the trade.

(8123.) [Then you object to it upon both grounds ?] Yes.

Mr. WILLIAM KERRY (11th December, 1891).

(8576.) I am a miner employed at the Swanwick collieries, Alfreton, the property of Mr. Palmer Morewood.

(8581.) My present occupation is conveying the coal, as contractor, from the face to the pit bank.

(8582.) The work is done chiefly by boys and young men, ranging from about 14 up to 21 years of age.

(8583.) I am responsible for the payment of the wages of the boys under my charge.

(8588.) The length of time we work is eight hours winding; the boys go down about a quarter past six in the morning, and they arrive at the bank again at about a quarter past three, and we stand half an hour, what we call snap time, out of that.

(8589.) As a rule we stand this snap time from half-past eleven to twelve o'clock in the day; but the boys, all of them as any gentleman will know, want snap before that time. If a boy leaves home at a quarter to six, and gets to his work to go down at a quarter past, by eight o'clock in the morning at the very latest he will want refreshment. You have to allow them to get this refreshment in the legal working hours. In my opinion, as I understand it, the eight hours day means no snap time. I fail to see how we can work boys from bank to bank eight hours without any snap, as we find it very difficult, in fact you really cannot keep them to one snap time now, and I fail to see how you are going to do it when we get eight hours from bank to bank with no snap time allowed.

(8590.) [I understand you to express the opinion that the eight hours legal day, which is the subject of agitation at the present time, is deemed to be an eight hours day without what you call snap times?] I understand it as that.

(8591.) As I understand it from bank to bank, it means in many cases six and a half hours, but in a few cases it means seven.

(8598.) I think if the eight hours from bank to bank is adopted, the winding probably would be only six hours and a half in most cases, and that will cause a reduction to the boys in proportion to the wage. In my contract it would mean probably about an hour, but we are only on a small scale compared with other collieries; it would mean about an hour, and in that case there would be an hour's less winding coal. The loss of this output would certainly mean a reduction in proportion to everyone that works under my contract.

(8599.) I believe the genuine feeling amongst the men in our district is that they are not in favour of an eight hours day.

(8614.) The effect of an Eight Hours' Act upon the position of the boys would be first it will reduce their wages, that is my opinion.

(8615-5A.) [I presume it would reduce your own earnings also?] Yes, correspondingly.

(8616.) [And you also think that if the effect of an eight hours' Act was to deprive the boys of half an hour for snap that would be prejudicial to their health?] I am quite convinced of it.

(8617.) [And to their work?] They could not work without the snap.

(8618.) [At present they have snap at half-past 11?] That is it, till 12.

(8619.) [And therefore they have to go from a quarter past 5 to half-past 11 without any recognised hour for taking food?] That is it.

(8623.) I think the men's real feeling is not in favour of an eight hours' Act.

(8624.) I go by what I hear amongst the men. I have no certain facts, not belonging to the Union in any shape or form.

(8628.) Do you think that if an eight hours' day was introduced in your district it would lead to an attempt on the part of the owners to establish a double shift?] The double shift system has never been introduced into our district, as far as I know, in any shape or form whatever; it is a fallacy altogether.

(8629.) I do not think it is adapted to our district at all.

(8630-31.) [Supposing the output were reduced, as you believe would be the case, in what way do you think that the coal-owners could make up for that diminution?] I cannot see that it can be made up.

(8650-51.) At the snap time, from 11.30 to 12, there is no winding of coal.

(8652.) Everybody then stops and gets his bait or meal.

(8653.) [And it is your impression that in case an eight hours' Act was passed from bank to bank the snap time would be abolished?] I believe so.

(8654.) I am given to understand that there is no snap under the eight hours. It is eight hours from bank to bank and no standing while the pit is open.

(8655.) I understand that from bank to bank means going down, and that there is no standing in the winding during that time; there cannot be if it is law for a man to come out when it is bank to bank, and it does not matter what is amiss he must come out, as I understand.

(8656.) That is my understanding of the system of bank to bank, that it means abolishing or putting an end to the snap time.

(8657.) I am aware that at conferences the delegates from Derbyshire have always, at least for some years past, advocated eight hours.

(8658.) [Are you aware that Mr. Haslam and Mr. Harvey have strongly urged the adoption of the eight hours?] I believe they are going in for the eight hours.

(8659.) [Do you think that they do not, in that respect, represent the opinion of the majority of the men?] I do.

(8660.) [And you base that opinion of yours, on the fact that you have not heard many of the men themselves declare in favour of it, and that you have heard many declare against it; is that so?] That is it; I believe the defect is done in the ballot. I am not prepared to say in which way, but I believe that is the secret of it.

(8664.) I said that I had no special reasons upon which to base the opinion that the men were not in favour of the eight hours, only it was an impression made upon my mind.

(8665.) I have no intercourse with the Union in any shape or form, and I only go by the conversation amongst the men, the general feeling that prevails among them.

(8666.) I believe the eight hours must mean reduction in wages.

(8667.) [You have made a statement, and we should like to know whether you have any special knowledge or any special fact upon which you could base the opinion which you have expressed; that is simply it?] Only by conversation amongst the men.

(8668.) [Then if you could be convinced that an eight hours' legal day would not do away with the snap time, that would remove the difficulty with respect to the boys that you have spoken of, would it not?] I do not think it would remove a very great deal of difficulty, because there is an hour's winding gone; where is it going to be made up?

As I take the legal eight hours, they ask to be from bank to bank. It will take at least half an hour to wind the men in and in some cases more, and it takes the same to wind them from the bottom to the top: and that means about six hours and a half winding. The deficiency is gone, the tonnage is gone. Where is it going to be made up?] As I understand, the masters are not prepared to give that; that question will have to be deal with later on, I suppose. The question is, are the masters prepared to give the extra amount for the hour and a half winding that is lost?

(8680.) [You assume all that, but you have no special knowledge of any proposition in the proposed Bill to do away with the snap time?] I do not see where the snap time is to come in.

(8697.) [I understand that your objections to an eight hours' legal day are twofold; first you think that if it had the effect of doing away with snap that would be injurious to the boys; and secondly, you think that it would so far reduce the output as to materially affect their wages?] I do.

(8698.) [Is that a correct statement of your position?] Yes.

(8699.) [And if it did away with snap time, it would still be necessary for the boys to have food at some time or another, and that time they would have to take as best they could?] Yes, that is so.

Mr. JOHN BENNETT.

(8724.) I am a member of the Derbyshire Miners' Association.

(8726.) I believe they have passed resolutions in favour of the eight hours from bank to bank, but I do not think there is much in it myself. I do not think it showed the correct feeling of the men; this ballot paper does not.

(8727-8.) I think that notwithstanding that such resolutions have been passed, the resolutions do not reflect or express the general feeling of the men, because of the way in which they are ballotted; because of the way the ballot papers are drawn up, and everything there are open and free for everybody to see. That is a ballot paper; there is no name signed or anything on it (*producing a ballot paper*).

(8731.) [This ballot paper reads thus, "Derbyshire Miners "Association Labour Representation Ballot Paper. Are you "in favour of starting a labour candidate for Parliament out "of the funds of the Miners' Association?" Then there are

two columns, the one headed "Yes," the other "No" "Place a cross under the head 'yes' or 'no,' whichever you are in favour of." There was issued a similar ballot paper with a heading "Are you in favour of a legislative eight hours days?" followed by the same form "yes," "no," with the direction to place a cross under the one or under the other according to the view of the person voting.

(8732.) I think the check weighman sees every one of the papers when it is put in; it is put in openly, and, of course, he can retaliate on the men if they do not come up to his wishes. That is where it is.

(8733-4.) I think many vote because others do on those papers, especially when the stallman votes for a certain thing the men generally follow—they often follow.

(8735.) That is the ground upon which I think that the vote of the Miners' Association in favour of an eight hours' day is not to be regarded as reflecting the general opinion.

(8736-7.) [How would an eight hours' day affect the Saturday half-holiday? We should not like it at all; we would have to work until two o'clock instead of closing at half-past ten on Saturdays, because we would have to work eight hours every day from bank to bank, so I suppose.

(8738.) [I do not know that there is any proposal of that sort?] We cease work now at half-past ten on Saturdays, and I do not think the majority of the men would like to work any longer.

(8739.) I take it we would have to work the eight hours from bank to bank every day.

(8740.) I mean we would have to do so as the result of an Act of Parliament.

(8741.) [Or that you would have to do so in order to meet the needs of the trade?] Certainly, yes.

(8743.) The output where I work is about 400 tons per day, and it would take about 75 tons off if you were to take an hour and a-half off the winding.

(8756.) [You say you think that the result of the ballot taken on the eight hours' question does not really represent the opinion of the men?] I do not think so.

(8757.) [Do you complain of the way in which the ballot is taken?] Yes.

(8758.) [I consider that the ballot does not really provide any safeguard of secrecy.

(8775.) A legislative eight hours' day would reduce the working hours of the stall-men from eight to six and a-half or six and three-quarters.

(8777.) The output of coal be reduced in proportion to the reduction of hours.

(8778.) It would be reduced in proportion.

(8779.) [You do not think that, during those shorter hours, the stall-men might work harder and in that way compensate to some extent for the shorter time?] I do not think the stall-man could, and if he were to attempt to do so he would endanger the lives of the men under him. I think the stall-man is responsible for the safety of the men; he is supposed to look after them.

(8780.) [You say you think that more rapid working would endanger the safety of the men; will you kindly explain that a little more in detail?] If the stall-men were to attempt to get the same amount of coal in six and a half hours as they do in eight hours now, they would be neglecting their own work and be getting coal instead of examining the roof, and so on.

(8781.) In our district the stallman's work includes repairing the stall, timbering, and so on.

(8282.) I think that some of the time which is now spent in that important work would be given up to the extracting of the coal instead.

(8709.) [Upon what do you base your opinion that reducing the hours to eight hours a day would reduce the working hours to six and a half?] I suppose if it was from bank to bank we should go down at six and we should have to be all out by two to be eight hours from bank to bank really. I should allow half an hour for walking each way, and half an hour snap; that is an hour and half off, but I give it as six hours and three-quarters, which is allowing a point.

(8848.) [In your own colliery you think there is a considerable number opposed to a legislative eight hours' day?] I think they would be opposed to having to work a full day on Saturday more than anything.

(8849.) [You mean they would opposed to a 48 hours week?] Yes.

(8850.) [And you are opposed to it?] Yes, we work 44 hours now.

(8851.) [Has there ever been any application made on behalf of the miners generally in your district for any reduction of hours?] Not at the colliery where I work.

(8852.) [You are in a union, are you not?] Yes.

(8853.) [Do you know whether the Derbyshire Unions have made any applications to the employers for a reduction of the hours of labour in collieries within the last two or three years?] I do not know that they have.

Mr. BENJAMIN MORRIS:—

(8854.) I am a colliery deputy in connexion with the colliery district of Derbyshire.

(8855.) Am employed by the Blackwell Colliery Company.

(8889.) I am most certainly opposed to legal a eight hours. I am very much in favour of short hours— very much in favour of eight hours by combination. But the legal eight hours I am very much opposed to for various reasons. The first is that it would be a very great injustice to the men themselves. The second is the legal enactment could not possibly be carried out in the case of a miner's work. The work of a miner is of such a character that the miner could not leave his work at a given moment—not at all times I mean—because he never knows for five minutes what is going to call for his attention or what is going to take place: and my experience as a miner has led me to understand this—that if there is a law passed to prohibit me from keeping my tool in my hand and doing any kind or manner of work after a certain time, it would not only be an injustice to me, but it would be a great loss to me at times: and if I am bound by the present law that is now in existence to do certain things this difficulty will arise. Of course the Mines' Regulation Act imposes on us certain obligations to pay attention to various things in connexion with the miner's work; and if that be so, and a legal eight hours comes into force, the two laws will clash, and the miner must either be continually summoned or he must certainly break the law.

[8890.) I am in favour of a limitation by arrangement of the present hours of underground labour.

(8891-5.) [To what extent?] Eight hours' coal-turning seems to me to be reasonable and fair between employers and employed; and the eight hours' turning would meet the requirements of the markets, etc. At present the coal-turning hours with us are eight. Out of that we stay off half-an-hour for meal time; and then we work an extra half-an-hour every day in order to leave work at 12 on Saturday;

and we are paid a full day for it. That is a local arrangement that exists at nearly all the collieries in our district.

(8900.) [Are you under the impression that the advocates of a legal eight hours' day propose to couple with that the abolition of meal time?] I shall be very pleased indeed to be convinced that they are not in favour of abolishing the meal time; but so far as I have been led to understand yet, that is so. In fact, Mr. Pickard, in his speech before the Coal Owners' Association in London, on this very question, distinctly told them that he went in for eight hours' continuous work, and no meal time whatever allowed Those were Mr. Pickard's own words.

(8901.) But there is one thing that I complain about, and a number of the members also complained about it, and that is the way the ballot papers were drawn up. It was very misleading indeed. The first question upon the ballot paper was: "Are you in favour of eight hours by Act of Parliament?" The second question was: "Are you against "eight hours by Act of Parliament?" Well, as a matter of fact, all the men are in favour of eight hours. I may say I wrote a letter to the press on this very same question drawing attention to the unfair way in which the ballot papers were drawn up; and the men said themselves, "Now, if we do not vote in favour of an eight hours' day by law we are "voting against the eight hours altogether," and thus they were misled. Now what we say is this. If the ballot papers had been, "Are you in favour of an eight hours by Act of Parliament?" and then the second question had been, "Are you in favour of an eight hours' day by combination?" it would have been more satisfactory to the men, and the result would have been very different to what it was.

(8922.) I do not object to a reduction of the hours to eight.

(8923.) I mean eight hours' coal turning, not from bank to bank.

(8924.) On the ballot papers of which I have spoken, the expression "eight hours" was used without being further defined.

(8925.) [Can you tell us the exact words on the ballot paper?] I can. They are the same words as appear on that ballot paper that has been handed up to the Chairman, only it was in connexion with the legal eight hours, instead of the question that was on that paper that has been handed round. It said, "Are you in favour of an eight hours by Act of Parliament?" and then the second question was, "Are you against eight hours by Act of Parliament?"

(8926.) [Then you told us that every miner in your district was in favour of an eight hours' day?] I do not say everyone. There is a considerable minority.

(8930.) [Therefore, in your opinion, the statement that that vote was a vote given in favour of a legal eight hours' day from bank to bank would be misleading?] I think it would.

(8943.) [Do you think that the men were not well informed as to the difference between an eight hours by legal enactment and an eight hours' day by amicable arrangement? That is what I do believe—that they were not well informed.

(8951.) [Again with respect to the eight hours from bank to bank and the eight hours' drawing of coal, have you the same opinion also that the men in that case were not aware of the difference?] Yes, that is so.

(8954.) [You know what was going on then with respect to the reduction of hours in 1885, 1886, and 1887?] I know that the men were in favour of a reduction of hours, but I always understood from the men themselves,

and from what I could glean of their views, that they were in favour of it by combination.

(8955.) I am quite aware that the agitation for some years has been for the eight hours from bank to bank. That lately has been the agitation among the leaders of the men. I am not here to say it is so among the men, because the men have expressed themselves frequently in my hearing to the effect that they do not believe in an eight hours from bank to bank.

(8956.) [Are we to suppose for a moment that the leaders of the men do not reflect the opinion of the men in cases like this?] It would be hard for me to sit here and say that, but one cannot close one's ears to the sayings that the men make use of among themselves, and it is that which I am repeating to you now. I should not like to cast any reflection whatever upon the agent in any shape or form. If the agents get the majority of votes at any meeting, we are justified in saying that the agents are reflecting the opinions of the men.

(8957.) [Are you of opinion that they have not had a sufficient majority to justify them in carrying on the agitation for reducing the hours from bank to bank?] I would not like to say that, because when the ballot was taken, it showed quite a contrary result to that.

(8962.) Undoubtedly there is a misunderstanding among the men. They did not think that by stopping off at a certain time the law would have any effect upon them at all. That was undoubtedly the opinion among a number of the men until recently. In fact, I have conversed with men myself, and have said: "Now look here, if the law steps in "and prohibits you from working more than eight hours, "you would have to stop this," and the answer I have got "is, "How is that?" I have replied, "Simply because it

"will be a legal enactment, and if you stay over the time it "will be illegal and you will be breaking the law." Then they have said they did not know that.

(8969-70.) [If it was provided that in case of emergency men should be allowed to remain in to do necessary repairs, would that meet the case?] It would not, indeed. I know the drift of your question, and I have had that in my mind. If there is a proviso made of allowing men to stay in to do work of various kinds, it would only tend to cause the law to be broken with impunity. They could all say it was a case of emergency, and nobody would be there to witness what kind of work was done. They could say so-and-so, and the law would be evaded and broken continually.

(8980-1.) The whole question put to the men was, "Are you in favour of an eight hours' day by Act of Parliament, or are you against an eight hours' day by Act of Parliament?" And therefore, in my opinion, the men, if they had voted against an eight hours' day by Act of Parliament would have felt they were voting against an eight hours' day.

(8983.) We have not formulated a demand for eight hours upon the employers through our Union.

(8985.) There is no reason why we should not do that. I have always thought that we ought to have done it long before now, and so cease the agitation.

(8992.) [Do you mean eight from bank to bank?] No; I do not think it would meet the requirements of the market at all. To reduce the hours to eight from bank to bank would mean this: the men would be walking in and out in their masters' time, instead of walking in and out in their own time; consequently they would have to be paid for walking in and out from their work in their masters' time. I may perhaps be allowed to further explain myself in this way, Stallmen—contractors—who have had men working under

them, sometimes seven men and sometimes less, pay them at present an average wage of about 6s.; and supposing you adopt a system of eight hours from bank to bank it would mean a considerable reduction from these men's time in turning coal; consequently they would not be able to pay the same amount of wage to their day men unless they get a material advance upon their contract; and, as a matter of fact, the day men express themselves as totally against any reduction; and the stallmen say, "Well, if it comes off, we shall have to reduce you unless we get a substantial rise," and that is where dissatisfaction exists.

(8993.) [In order to be quite clear upon this, what you desire is not an eight hours' from bank to bank, but an eight hours' day of coal-turning?] Quite so.

(8994.) [And that you practically have in your district at the present time?] Yes, that we practically have.

Mr. ROBERT SMELLIE (20th January, 1892):—

(9783-5.) I appear here on behalf of the Larkhall coal miners, Lanarkshire.

(9823-4.) With regard to the hours of labour, the men have been repeatedly tested on the question of a legal eight hours day, and they are unanimous in its favour. In my opinion, and in the opinion of the men generally, eight hours is quite long enough for anyone to be underground, and I believe that an eight hours' day never will be gained in Lanarkshire by organisation—that it must be a legislative or legal eight hours' day. The hours wrought at present are about ten per day, from bank to bank.

(9922.) You say that the men are unanimously in favour of a legal eight hours' day, and you add that you believe that an eight hours' day will never be gained by organisation; is

that because you do not believe that you will ever get an organisation sufficiently strong to secure it?] The reason is this: I have seen our organisation adopt an eight hours' day. On the organisation agreeing to adopt an eight hours' day, the employers brought such pressure to bear upon individuals and upon sections of their workmen as to get them to break away from it in spite of all that could be done by the Association. I have known men dismissed because they told their fellow-workmen that the eight hours was up, and that it was time they were going home. I have been told myself in the pit that unless I went home myself at the end of eight hours, without telling anyone else that the eight hours was up, I would be dismissed.

(9923.) [Then I presume the employers in your district have a very strong objection to a working day of only eight hours?] It seems so.

(9924-5.) I do not know what their objection rests upon. I do not know what their objections are at all.

(9959.) [You spoke of the miners being almost unanimously in favour of the legal eight hours' day, and you said that their opinions had been tested; in what way have they been tested?] *We balloted the men on the question about four years ago. Then again we placed before them a petition which we said was to be presented to Parliament, and we asked them to sign their names to it. I would say that about three-fourths of the miners in our district signed the petition in favour of the eight hours day. We have tested

---

*N.B.—In revising his proof Mr. Smellie regretted that he had made a mistake in saying that the men were tested by ballot. He gives as the correct statement:—"Pit meetings were held at every pit in the Larkhall district, at which the men were tested by an open vote. We found them unanimously in favour of the eight hours' day."—G.D.

the matter openly at several mass meetings, and in every case the men have voted in favour of a legislative eight hours day.

(9960.) [Was this ballot of four years ago in the Larkhall district, or throughout Lanarkshire ?] In the Larkhall district.

(9961.) [Did the men generally sign, vote that is ?] The vote was pretty general at the time.

(9962.) [By ballot ?] Yes, by ballot four years ago.

(9963.) And a large majority were in favour of the eight hours day.

(9964.) There have not been any recent ballots on the subject.

(9965.) [You have already expressed the opinion that so far as Lanarkshire is concerned, the eight hours day could not be got by organisation, at least, you are not hopeful that it could ?] My whole experience for the last 17 years has been that it never will be brought about by organisation. I am sorry to have to confess it, but I believe that is the fact.

(9966.) I do not know anything about the Fife district.

(9967.) Do you know as a matter of fact that they have an eight hours day by organisation ?] Yes, by organisation.

(9968.) [And that they have had it a long time ?] Yes, they have had it a long time.

(9969.) [Do you not think that there would be very considerable difficulty in carrying out and enforcing an eight hours' Act, unless the men had an active and powerful organisation to back it up ?] I think that a legal eight hours' day if passed just now would be carried out, but I consider that it would be carried out a great deal better if

the men had an organisation to see that it was properly carried out. I believe it would be a great improvement, and fairly well carried out without organisation on the part of the men, but I believe it would be a great deal better carried out, and more to the benefit of the men if they were organised.

Mr. WILLIAM SMALL, (21st January, 1892).

(10,157.) I appear here on behalf of the Blantyre Miners Association, and mining in Lanarkshire generally.

(10,229.) I wish to speak with regard to the hours of labour. The almost unanimous opinion of Lanarkshire miners is in favour of an eight hours day by legislation. This question has been frequently tested by vote throughout the country, and I may say the unanimous voice of every meeting that I have ever been present at was that the Legislature should establish immediately an eight hours working day for miners. It has been held out to the workmen by the employers that they are thereby running great risk of foreign competition. The workmen, as a rule, hold this as a bogeyman, and there is no truth whatever in the suggestion that there is any dread or fear of foreign competition. The truth is, statistics show that it is the British miner who is handicapping the Continental miner, instead of the Continental miner who would be handicapping the British miner. The output per man in Great Britain is much higher than on the Continent, and the value of coal raised at the pit mouth is much higher on the Continent than it is in Great Britain, so that in those circumstances it is impossible that any fear should arise from foreign competition in the coal trade. The men have studied the subject thoroughly, and they have looked into it, and they are convinced that the dread of foreign competition is simply a bogus cry to divert their attention from the reform which they want.

(10,231.) All employers are dominated by a spirit of commercialism. They only look at things through commercial spectacles. They conceive that the more trade they do the better for themselves, whereas the opposite is the case.

(10,232.) It is a want of knowledge and enlightenment on their part?

(10,233.) I think the interest of the employer equally with that of the workmen would be assisted by the change, and of the nation also, because it is now becoming current thought that we are depleting the country of minerals, and by-and-bye we will be running short of it, whilst the continental nations are saving their mineral wealth, and we ought to direct the attention of the country to that fact. As a national safeguard I think that an eight hour day is necessary. Here are some figures as to the relative output per man of the Continent and British mines, and the average value at the pit bank.

(*The witness put in tables.*)

(10,296.) Although the Lanarkshire miners have not been able to form a strong organisation among themselves, they have nevertheless given the lead to Scotland in the matter of raising wages.

(10,297.) By limiting the production; that that is the weapon which they use.

(10,298.) They are unable to combine to obtain for themselves an eight hours day, because the difficulties in the way of obtaining an eight hour day are very great. I know in Blantyre district, Dixon's workmen, to the extent of 600 men, established an eight hours day. They worked upon it for about two months, and the employers, in order to root it out, resorted to evictions from their homes, and the result

was this, that the men rather than submit to those evictions in the winter with no place to go to were coerced into working long hours.

(10,301.) A five day week is more easily obtained than an eight hours day, because we can watch the men who seek to violate the five day policy by preventing them going to their work, and can prevent them from going to their work by picketing, but you cannot drag a man out of the pit at eight hours.

(10,304.) I do not suppose the economic conditions would be one whit altered by an eight hours day, because the same amount of coal could be produced in eight hours.

(10,306.) I am perfectly convinced that the employers are mistaken in supposing that their interests would suffer.

(10,323.) I think that although competition may be a reality, nevertheless it is not so important as to prevent Parliament legislating for an eight hours' day.

(10,324.) Paradoxical as it may seem, it is a fact that the more the miners do the less they get for it. I happen to have in my hands the return of a colliery in Durham for 14 years, collected by Mr. Lowthian Bell, and I find that in the six years ending 1869 each man raised per diem 80·39 cwts., for which he received 4s. 1d·27, and every year, as he decreases his output, so, in proportion does his pay increase. And the very same holds good with the employer. If they would not produce such a large amount of coal they would have a better price and bigger profits.

(10,449.) [Now how is it then that while you are able to take the initiative in seeking advances of wages (and in enforcing them by strike even when you deem it necessary, notwithstanding your comparative disorganisation) you are unable also to shorten the hours by united action ?] I have

instanced a case already, where one large colliery adopted the eight hours, and a series of evictions and ejection from houses resulted. That broke up the movement. I have seen the sheriff going to 10 one day, to 12 another, to evict men from their homes because they had adopted the eight hours system.

(10,688-90.) Our standard hours of labour are 10 per day, but I am aware that in another part of Scotland—in Fife-shire—they are only working eight hours a day, and have been for upwards of twenty years.

(10,691-3.) We have established the eight hours frequently, and we have urged the men over and over again to adopt the eight hours system. I have seen it almost unanimously adopted in the county, by the workmen themselves, and abandoned in the course of a week or two, or it may be in the course of a month or two.

(10,710-12.) I have only been speaking on this Commission in the interests of miners, but I am of opinion that it ought to be enforced for all trades. I am not going to discuss the merits of the eight hours question, I am simply giving my opinion. I think that an eight hours day is desirable for railway servants above all others.

(10,713.) I do not assume that there will be any such a thing as forcing an eight hours day upon anyone; there will be a good deal of permission about the matter.

Colonel JOSEPH BRAMAH COCHRANE (22nd January, 1892):—

(10,825.) I am Chairman of the South Staffordshire and East Worcestershire Coal Masters' Association, also Chairman of the South Staffordshire and East Worcestershire Wages Board.

(10,908-9.) The hours of labour are from 7 till 4, with practically an hour out for descending the pit and for the meal. That is eight hours' work. Nine hours from bank to bank ?]

(10,910.) The ascending comes out of the nine hours. The men descend at 7 o'clock, in the employer's time, but they ascend at 4 o'clock in their own time.

(10,911-12). The skilled men, the hewers, can do their work in much less time, and are allowed to come out as soon as they have done what is called their stint.

(10,913.) That would only refer to the hewers. The loaders and drawers would be there, as a rule, their full time.

(10,914.) The hewer I should say, as a rule, would be out in from seven to eight hours according to whether his place is unfavourable or favourable. His place may be difficult or easy, and he would in that time have done from a day and a-quarter to a day and three-quarters, based on the nominal day.

(10,915-6.) I should put the average hours of the hewer from bank to bank at 7½ including descending, but not the ascending.

(10,917.) Including the ascending time I would make it from 7½ to eight hours, I think.

(10,919.) If their stint was such that they could not do it in the hours, they would at once apply for a reduction of their stint.

(10,970.) I do not think there is at all a strong feeling in favour of an Eight Hours' Act, making it imperative that underground workmen shall not be in the pit for more than eight hours from bank to bank. I think the miners them-

selves are very divided as to the desirability of it, and I would just add that I think if the eight hours were given with a corresponding reduction of wages it would cause extreme dissatisfaction.

(10,971.) The application for eight hours may have been mentioned at our board, but it has never been taken up seriously.

(10,972.) So far as the coal getters are concerned, they now have practically eight hours' work.

(10,973.) 7½ to eight from bank to bank, but they may work nine if they like.

(10,974.) No doubt some do; but then they earn so much more money.

(10,975.) So far as the employers are concerned, no difficulties are thrown in the way of their coming away at eight hours, that I am aware of.

(11,043.) I do not think that the hours which are now worked are injurious to the health of the men.

(11,046.) If it were made illegal for anyone to be down more than eight hours, it would reduce the output very considerably, and be very disastrous to our district, from the fact that we have at the present time a commission for draining the mines, and we are very much over head and ears in debt at the present time in that commission, and it depends entirely on our increase in trade as to whether we can carry on the mines of the district satisfactorily, if at all. We are now applying for a loan of £100,000, in order to assist in draining the remainder of our district, and to enable us to pay off our present debts, with the interest accruing thereon, and if anything arose whereby our output was considerably

reduced, it would be disastrous for the whole of the district, and to all the miners and trades in the district.

Mr. JACOB RAY (22nd January, 1892):—

(11,078.) I appear here as one of the three representatives of the Colliery Officials' Association for the Rhondda Valley and District.

(11,079.) The constitution of the Association is of colliery officials of all grades, from the manager down to the fireman.

(11,080.) It has been in existence for four years.

(11,099-100.) I have been deputed to say a word upon the proposed eight hours from bank to bank. I have a resolution passed by the association on that point which I will endeavour to read to you, it was passed last Saturday at our meeting.

(11,101.) It was the annual meeting. That is the reason why you had not the proof before; we could not send any points until we met to get the mind of the association.

(11,102.) There were present at this time certainly 50 or 60 in the meeting. The resolution reads:—"In the opinion of this meeting the system of eight hours from bank to bank is totally impracticable in its application to the South Wales coalfield." My reason for supporting that resolution, which we consider to be impracticable, is that the number of hours that would be allowed by the collier to form his day's work would not be sufficient. Eight hours from bank to bank would not mean more than about 5½ hours' to six hours' work in the face of his stall; it would not mean more than five hours in some cases. In the majority of our pits it would take us now three-quarters of an hour to put the men

down every morning; it would take the men as a rule half an hour to reach their respective working places; we put it that they take half an hour for meals during the day; 20 minutes are allowed for all men for meal time out of the hours worked at present; it would take again the men half an hour to get back to the bottom of the shaft in the evening, and another three-quarters of an hour to raise all the men out of the shaft; so taking out the time of descending and ascending, and travelling to the working faces, we find that there would not be more than five hours of actual work at the face.

(11,130.) I do not say that I would be in favour of any shortening of the present hours of the boys?]

(11,131.) I don't think that they are at all too long, comparing the hours they work with the hours I worked as as a boy myself.

(11,186.) I think there are a great many now of the older collieries in our district where they could not work more than 5½ hours if an eight hours' day from bank to bank became a rule.

(11,187.) I think that it would take about three hours per day for these men to be put down the shaft, walk to their working faces, and the usual 20 minutes for dinner and back again. There is the time of looking to lamps, and in the summer-time they have to wait till their eyesight comes, to see their way. After walking for a mile or a mile and a half, naturally they must have a rest. You could not expect a man to start working after walking a mile or a mile and a half underground.

(11,188.) If the proposed eight hours from bank to bank, compulsory by Legislation, was brought about, there would

not be more than 5½ hours work in the face of the collieries that are in my charge now.

(11,190.) [But do you know a case where, between the descending and ascending, travelling back and for the &c., three hours a day is taken up?] Yes, I do. I can give you a case or cases where it takes a man to be sent down in the morning 45 minutes, and I know cases where it takes over an hour. I should say 45 minutes is the average time now taken for putting men down in our district. I put it down that a man would be 10 minutes at the bottom of the shaft locking his lamp and getting his eyesight. I put it on an average, then it would take him half-an-hour to get to his working face, and it will take more to some of our furthest places. I give him 20 miuutes for meals, according to the custom of the colliers, to eat their food, lunch about 10 or 11 o'clock, and again about 1 o'clock. Then I take it that it takes half-an-hour to come back again, and another 45 minutes to ascend the shaft afterwards.

(11,191-4.) It is so in the Mainby Colliery now, including meal times and time of ascending and descending from bank to bank.

(11,196.) [Of course the same thing will exactly apply as to the amount of time to go down and to walk then as it does now. From what you say, I think we are right in inferring that from the nominal number of hours in the pit, these men take three hours to go down to work, to eat their meals, and to come back again?] Yes.

(11,207.) I object to the men being debarred from working less than eight hours, in other words I object to an eight hours' bank to bank day.

(11,208.) I do not find that the hours, as now worked, are injurious to the health of the people employed in the mines.

(11,209.) I have lived among them all my life.

Mr. GRIFFITH THOMAS (22nd January, 1892):—

(11,214-5.) I am President of the Rhondda Collieries Officials' Association, also Certificated general manager of Lockett's Merthyr Collieries.

(11,311.) [Do you hold the same opinion as the former witness with respect to the hours of labour?] I should leave that to the Owners' Association to make a start with, not for us to make the start first. I decline to make any remark about it.

(11,312.) [You do not wish to answer that question?] Not now; but I am of opinion that it will never answer in South Wales to make eight hours from bank to bank in steam coal collieries.

(11,313.) [Then, you are of the same opinion?] I have this opinion upon that point. It will never answer in South Wales. I may not see it in my time, and I may see it; but I am of this opinion to-day before the Commissioners, it will not suit the steam coal collieries in South Wales.

(11,314.) [What class of men, in your opinion, are they for whom eight hours would be too little for them to do their work in?] Even the ordinary collier himself. If you take eight hours from bank to bank that means 45 minutes to go down, 45 minutes to come up, fully half an hour to travel to work, fully half an hour to come back. You put those periods together, and deduct the total from eight, and you will see what will remain, and then you need not ask any more questions about it.

(11,315.) [But you certainly do not suggest that it takes 45 minutes for a man to go down the shaft?] For every

man to go down the shaft. If every man is to be up in eight hours it means eight hours from bank to bank; that means eight hours for everything, going down, coming up, travelling in, travelling out, meal-time, etc.

(11,316.) [And you think there is no class of collier in South Wales that would be able to do his work in the remaining time?] We cannot keep going in the steam coal collieries, taking it through and through. That is my experience.

MR. HOWELL JOHN (22nd January, 1892—)

(11,326.) I am the general manager of Messrs. Perch & Co., House Coal Collieries in the Rhondda Valley.

(11,327-8.) I have worked underground as a collier for about 23 years, and I am now the certificated manager of these collieries.

(11,340-1.) With regard to the eight hours' day from bank to bank, I have the resolutions which have been read. In one of the collieries under my charge an eight hours' day from bank to bank would reduce the actual working hours of the men to six hours at the face. The distance to travel underground is nearly three miles; so that if you take off the time required by the men to walk backwards and forwards, and the half an hour for meals it reduces the working hours by two; so that instead of eight hours actual working it would only mean six.

(11,342.) At present they work nine hours.

(11,343.) They have the privilege of working nine hours. I do not say they all do it.

(11,344.) [What do you say are their present hours from bank to bank—from entering the cage to descend to leaving

the cage after ascending ?] I differ a little on this point from the previous witnesses. Ours are drifts and levels which the men work themselves. It is at present reckoned to be 54 hours per week actual working.

(11,351.) [You think that if the hours were shortened even to the extent of two per day, on the principal working days of the week at any rate, that would not lead to more days being worked per man per month ?] No.

(11,368.) [You spoke of a colliery in which an eight hour day would reduce the working at the face to six hours ?] Yes.

(11,369.) May I ask if that applies to the whole colliery, or only to some stalls in it ?] To the whole of the colliery. The nearest point of our present workings in that particular colliery is about 2½ miles from the mouth to the level.

(11,370.) [May I ask if in that colliery the present hours from bank to bank are longer than in collieries where the workings are not so far off from the surface ?] No. They are not longer than the general rule of the district.

(11,371.) [So that the time of working at the face in this particular colliery is shorter than at other collieries ?] It is owing to the distance to travel. In the steam coal collieries it takes a longer time to put the men down.

(11,372.) [Are the men handicapped by that in respect of their wages ?] Of course it is a loss—the less time they work the less money they earn.

(11,373.) [And they do not try to recoup themselves by working somewhat longer hours from bank to bank ?] Some of them do.

(11,374.) [It would be possible for them to do so so far as the regulations of the colliery are concerned?] Yes; but not further than 9½ hours or 10 hours.

(11,375.) [If, however, a legal eight hours' day was established, these men, who are already somewhat handicapped, would be more heavily handicapped?] Yes; it would be impossible then for them to work any more than six hours.

(11,376.) They would be at a disadvantage in respect of their wages, and the colliery wodld be at a disadvantage compared with other collieries in respect of its output.

Mr. DAVID EVAN DAVIES, Certificated Manager of the Cwmamon Collieries (23rd January, 1892.)

(11,441.) We believe that eight hours is impracticable for the coal mining of South Wales. It would reduce the number of actual hours in the face at our colliery to five hours, counting descending the pit 40 minutes, getting eyesight at the pit bottom 10 minutes, travelling to face 30 minutes, meal time 30 minutes, returning 30 minutes, ascending 40 minutes.

(11,442) The hours we are at present working are the equivalent over a week of the former uniform nine per day.

(11,443.) And the men may be said now to be from bank to bank an average of nine hours and 40 minutes.

(11,444.) If they were limited to eight hours from bank to bank that would be a loss of an hour and 40 minutes.

(11,445) And unless there was any curtailment of mealtimes underground, or any expediting of the men going in or coming out, that reduction of an hour and 40 minutes would come off the time at the face.

(11,446-7.) In this statement I am taking into consideration the half-hour for dinner, the time for winding, and the time occupied by the men in going to and from the face, which would be 180 minutes less than the eight hours, or three hours less than the eight hours of actual working.

(11,449.) At present there are six hours and 40 minutes at the face. Another objection raised to the eight hours' question is that the nature of the work of hewing coal in South Wales is such that to hurry the men at their work would have a tendency to increase the accidents. The nature of coal mining, especially coal getting in the face, is very dangerous, and should the men be hurried in any way it would have a tendency, in our opinion, to increase the number of accidents in the face.

(11,450.) I think the limitation of the hours would cause them to hurry, because the time at their disposal in the face to complete the day's work would be so reduced that they could not complete more than two-thirds or three-fourths at the outside of what they are doing now unless they hurry very much.

(11,451.) I am taking it for granted the rates of wages would continue the same.

(11,452.) They would endeavour to earn more per hour in fact.

(11,453.) [Do I understand you to say that the tendency to accidents would be increased by the desire of the men to work harder during the hours that they are at the face, or simply this, that having fewer hours at the face they spend time in working at the face which they would otherwise spend in repairing their stalls?] No, not exactly that; I mean that the time at their disposal to work in the

face would be so reduced, and compulsorily so, and their anxiety to earn as much as they can would have a tendency to compel them to work with greater speed, and in doing that they would neglect the careful examination of their working place, which has to be done every quarter-of-an-hour or half-an-hour; instead of looking at the danger they would be looking at the tram they would have to fill. And again, working against time would have a tendency to increase the accidents, because the men would be almost compelled to risk more than at present. They would do their utmost to fill their trams, or to complete their cogs, and run out for fear of being prosecuted. Even their hurry to reach the pit in time would have a tendency to increase the number of accidents when the men would be on their way to the pit. We know in South Wales that the men in coming out, when they are a little bit late, now come in such a hurry—I do not blame them at all—that there is a tendency to be too much so, and therefore a liability to lead to an accident.

(11,454.) [You say "a tendency to be too much so;" to be too much what?] In too much of a hurry.

(11,455-6.) [Do you desire to say more upon the subject of the shortening of the hours?] Yes, it has been stated that the greatest number of accidents takes place about the last hour worked, and as a reason for this it is said that the person becomes lethargic or too exhausted to be able to take the necessary precautions against danger. In 1891 the colliers worked less time, or a less number of hours per day, than they have done at least since 1873; and after all we find that the number of accidents in our district was greater in 1891 than it was in any year when all the men were work-

ing longer hours every day. This proves that the statement is incorrect.

(11,457.) [Do you mean a greater number absolutely, or a greater number in relation to tons wrought, or number of men employed, or what ?] The greater number of accidents in the district from falls of roofs and sides.

(11,458.) [Do you mean without reference to the number of men employed or tons raised ?] In every respect—in that respect a greater number.

(11,459.) [Of course, if your output in 1891 was considerably more than in 1873 the number of accidents might be larger merely in proportion ?] Yes; but what I am stating is this: that the number of accidents in 1891 is greater than in any year previous even in proportion to the number of men employed. It is my opinion that the number of hours a person works has nothing to do with the accident he receives until he has worked too many hours or becomes lethargic on account of overwork, or suffers for want of sleep. If we examine the reports of the inspectors for 1890 we find that in some districts, such as Lancashire and Ireland, the greatest number of accidents underground take place on the third floor, while other reports prove that there is no real difference in the hour. My own experience of 33 years confirms this statement. But in the steam coal collieries of South Wales, especially in bad roof, it is certain that there is more danger and more liability to accident in the first two or three hours of every shift, because during the 16½ hours or so that the place has been standing, the roof, bottom, and coal have been "working" or moving, and the collier does not know to what extent. It takes him some time to become

familiar, as it were, with the real dangers of his place. Anything that is working while he is there he can tell very nearly as to the real extent of the danger caused by this squeezing. I firmly believe that it is upon the individual workman we must rely for the best results so as to prevent all kinds of accidents underground. No Acts of Parliament, no inspectors, and no scientific appliances can eliminate from our mines the sources of danger or remove the necessity for individual and constant care on the part of our workmen, who are actually engaged in a work which is surrounded by so many sources of danger to life and limb as coal mining. Those workmen must be (and are continually) educated more, and convinced of the importance of taking care of their own lives and limbs.

(11,506.) [You say that the introduction of an eight hours' day would reduce the hours of working at the face in your colliery to five?] Yes.

(11,507.) [That at the present time the hours worked at the face in your colliery are six hours and 40 minutes?] About that.

(11,508-9.) [The time therefore actually lost in descending the pit, travelling to the face, meal time, and so forth, amounts at your colliery to no less than three hours?] Three hours.

(11,510.) [Is that exceptional or common?] No; our colliery, I think, is a typical colliery of the Aberdare and Merthyr Valleys.

(11,511.) [You mean in most of those collieries there would be, from the causes which you have mentioned, a loss of three hours as between the time from bank to bank and the time actually worked at the face?] Yes; the average I mean.

(11,592-3.) [Working eight hours would be rather too much?] I believe so; continually working for eight hours is rather too much—continually working I mean.

(11,594.) [Then the difference between you and the body of the miners is a difference of degree, and not of principle?] I suppose so, but I do not exactly know what the opinion of the miners is.

(11,626.) I have had over 30 years' work underground.

(11,627.) I know a great many people who also have worked a long time underground.

(11,628.) I have friends and relatives who are working underground now.

(11,629.) [Do you find that the number of hours they are worked is injurious to their health? No; they always work in a temperature varying from 64 degrees to 70 degrees.

Mr. EDWARD JONES (9th February, 1892) Mining Engineer and Colliery Owner, and Past Chairman of the Monmouthshire and South Wales Colliery Owners' Association:—

(11,686.) The proposal of reducing the hours of labour to eight per day would have an unfortunate effect on the working of collieries in Monmouthshire. At present the steady and attentive part of the men can do about 50 hours' work in the face per week, and if, from any cause, time is lost on one or two days, it can to an extent be made up on the remaining days of the week; but eight hours per day would prevent this being done unless the conditions were modified to 48 per week. Some of the advocates in favour of limiting the day to eight hours from bank to bank appear to believe that neither the earnings or the cost of production would be materially affected, but my experience is entirely the reverse

At a pit where the wages are made up and paid weekly I have succeeded in arriving at the cost for the 12 months ending June 1891. In 25 weeks the colliery worked 6 days per week to 54 hours from bank to bank. In the remaining 27 weeks only 42⅝ hours were worked from bank to bank, the loss being on account of colliers' holidays and bad trade. The increased cost in the 27 weeks as compared with the cost in the 25 weeks of full time was 9d. per ton and the loss caused as a direct result of Mabon's holidays was 5½d. per ton. It has been said that by more diligent attention to work a man would produce in eight hours nearly as much as in nine. From this view I entirely differ, but even if this could be done the difficulty would not be overcome, as the daily output of each pit is limited to the winding and hauling power of the engines and other machinery, and the loss of one hour's winding daily must necessarily and absolutely reduce the output more than 10 per cent.; besides there is no sound reason to conclude that the large number of men who voluntarily absent themselves from work in the early days of the week would be different under the new condition of things; the abstentions over a year in one pit I have taken were 41·3 per cent. on Mondays and 14·3 per cent. on Tuesdays. The double-shift system appears to me the only remedy to meet shortened hours of eight per day.

(11,725.) With regard to the hours, ten is the maximum.

(11,726.) Nobody would be engaged under ordinary circumstances underground for more than 10 hours, very rarely, I think; they go in our district at 7 o'clock, and they come up about 4 or half-past.

(11,727.) The average hours of the coal-getters in the face, I should say, would be about seven and a-half hours per day.

(11,728.) And from bank to bank it would vary of course with the distance from the bottom of the pit to the top, at

the surface. That would average three-quarters of a mile, I should say.

(11,746.) Some men go to work with more method and with more care than others, and can do, perhaps, quite as much as other men merely throwing physical strength into their work in a limited number of hours. I think it would be very prejudicial to some of the best of our men to hurry them over their work. I think it would add very much to the number of accidents. They can do a certain amount of work and get a certain amount of money by their earnings to support them and their families, but if you hurry them or rush them, and tell them they must do a certain amout of work in so many hours less, I think it would certainly tend to increase the number of accidents.

(11,747.) No, I do not think you can come to any conclusion on that point.

(11,748.) At one of our pits we wind about 51; at others we wind, I think, about 52; that is assuming that the machinery and everything goes smoothly during the whole week, but you cannot guarantee that for any individual week. 51 hours in one pit, which I have in my mind, would be the maximum, but possibly we should not be winding coal more than 48 or 49, from such accidents happening as a rope breaking or something of that kind, which you cannot avoid. Occasionally we are short of trucks for ten minutes, and therefore I think we must deal with the matter in a practical way. I do not think the actual winding would be more than 48 or 49 hours.

(11,751.) The average of the appointed winding hours does not reach 54 per week. On Monday they wind from 7 to half-past 1 o'clock.

(11,754.) The average number of hours that the men are in the colliery in our district, I think, would be 54. The winding is, as I have told you, 51 hours, and we add to

that half an hour each day for the men being in the pit. They commence at half-past 6, and they are supposed to be all down at 7. That gives a mean average of a quarter to 7 every morning, and at night they commence coming up at half past 4 and finish at 5. That would make an average of a quarter to 5, which would give 54 hours per week from bank to bank; that is the maximum.

(11,755.) In our district, as regards the hours worked, they are certainly not more than 54 hours. That is the maximum. There is nothing to preclude a workman remaining underground a little later, but I think it is very rarely they do so.

(11,756.) He is able to come if he likes, and I should say 95 or 97 per cent. of them do come out.

(11,757.) I speak in regard to that in connexion with the Monmouthshire and South Wales Coal Association as a body spreading over the whole district.

(11,814.) The effect of reducing the working hours from 54 hours per week to 48 hours per week would be an increase of the cost of production of above 9½d. per ton. It would make at least that difference.

(11,816.) Increasing the general cost of production of coal in our neighbourhood would affect manufacturers prejudicially, especially the tin-plate trade. That is a trade there is a very keen competition in now, and I think that any additional cost upon the coal would fall upon that, and would tend to limit the production of tin-plates very much in the country. Our district is the large producing district of tin plates, and just as present the state of that trade is in a very poor condition.

(11,817.) It would in many cases have the effect of closing a portion of the works in our district. It has had that tendency. The high prices lately have had largely that tendency.

(11,831.) With regard to the hours of labour I do not consider that the hours at present worked are prejudicial to the health of the men employed in the mines. I think they are quite as short as they ought to be. I have had nearly 40 years' experience, and they are very much shorter now than they were then, and the rate of wages paid is certainly double what it was 40 years ago and the hours are several per day less than they were then.

(11,832.) Certainly I do not consider the men are unhealthy by reason of working the number of hours they now work.

(11,833.) I have the greatest objection to limiting the hours of labour of any adult person. One may may do quite as much as he is able in nine hours; another man may do it in eight hours; but I think it would be very disastrous to limit the hours of adult labour.

(11,849.) [I should like to know from you whether it is your opinion that the work of miners would be carried on under safer conditions if the hours of labour were reduced by legislation to eight?] I think the accidents would increase as compared with the present time. I think the number of hours that the stall would be idle would be greater than at present. The men would also know that they would be limited to eight hours a day. What they are now doing in a methodical and careful manner would afterwards (that would be the tendency) be done in a hurry, and what is done in a hurry generally is not well done. I think it would tend to increase accidents.

MR. WILLIAM THOMAS:—

(11,899.) I am a colliery owner and mining engineer practising in South Wales.

(11,900.) I am a member of the Monmouthshire and South Wales Coalowners' Association, and also of the Sliding Scale Committee.

(11,901.) Have had over 50 years' experience of underground work, having commenced working as a miner boy when eight years old, and continued working as a collier till I was 24, and have been immediately concerned with collieries ever since.

(11,902.) Am now in charge of a number of collieries, some of them being the most important in the coalfield, the aggregate output of them being nearly a million and a half tons per annum.

(11,903-4.) I have heard the evidence that has just been given by Mr. Edward Jones, and I generally concur in that evidence.

(11,906.) I desire to say something with regard to an eight hours' shift. I am far from approving of restricting the hours of labour of adult workmen. My experience is that even now with the nine hours' shift many of our steady men, even when the pits are regularly going, are working occasionally more than nine hours. Men are not all constituted alike. Some, owing to their being naturally slow in their movements, and their habits of doing everything in a methodical manner, take longer time to do their work than men of smarter movements and less concise habits. It would be most unjust to the slow workmen to have the hours curtailed below nine. I am certain from my own experience that the result of compelling the men, under a penalty, to do their day's work in eight hours would very largely increase the accidents in our mines, for the men in their eagerness to fill coal would, especially about the end of the shift, not take the necessary time to do what was necessary to secure their

safety. In slack times we are not able to give our men anything like regular work; other times accidents occur, and, depending as we do upon our shipping, stormy weather often prevents their working regularly. In such cases, when a man has been idle for two or three days, it would be a pitiful thing to stop him working either early or late to earn all the money he could when work could be had. Let one picture to himself a good honest collier having been kept idle two or three days through no fault of his own, owing to an accident to the machinery, or a storm, being prevented from working two or three hours extra when he gets a chance to get an honest living for himself and family; the idea to me is preposterous. I know that when I worked as a collier I should have looked with great dissatisfaction upon any attempt by legislation to regulate my hours of working when I had the opportunity and felt inclined to earn as much money as I could. Working the collieries of my district now is much different to what it was when I was a youngster. In my younger days miners used to work 12, 14 and 15 hours per day, and for weeks at a stretch in the winter time we would not see daylight except on Saturday afternoon and Sunday, and had often to work in atmospheres so vitiated that to obtain some glimmer of light we had to place the candles almost horizontally before they would burn. At that time a man must have been a very good workman indeed. and work hard, to earn from 15s. to 18s. per week, while the datal men were still lower. The collieries at work in those days had but little gas to contend with, and were worked by a naked light, and were badly ventilated, and men and boys greatly suffered for want of ventilation. Thank goodness the collieries are now well ventilated, the exudation of gas in them demanding a large volume of air to clear it away, so that as a matter of fact the atmosphere in most of our collieries, and especially so in our largest collieries, is as pure and perhaps purer than it is in many public places and many

places of business in large towns. So as far as our collieries —especially steam coal collieries, where a current varying from 100,000 to 300,000 cubic feet per minute is being circulated through the workings—are concerned, it is not right to assume that to spend nine or ten hours in the pits is detrimental to health. In fact, a collier's occupation in these days is emphatically a healthy one, working as he does in good fresh air and in an even temperature. The work of a collier in our steam coal pits has been greatly changed of late years, since the sinking of our deep pits and the introduction of the long wall system of working. There is more creep, squeeze, or crush now in the deep pits than there was formerly in the shallow ones, and this squeeze loosens the coal, making it easier to get, but at the same time it makes the roof more troublesome and dangerous, and though it gives the collier less trouble to get the coal, it no doubt gives him more trouble to keep his roof up, and the net effect is that the Welsh steam collier of to-day does not do anything approaching the amount of manual labour, nor does he require as much skill to get his coal as the colliers of 30, or 40, or 50 years ago, when the old system of pillar and stall working was in vogue, while his earnings for the same amount, or rather the lesser amount, of manual labour is more than double what it was then. The happy result is that the colliers of to-day and their families are better fed, better clothed, and better housed, while his children are far better educated.

(11,910.) [You have spoken on the subject of a legal eight hours' day; but I do not think you told the Committee what, in your opinion, would be the economic effect of such a measure?]—The economic effect would be that it would increase our cost *pro rata* to the reduction in the hours of labour; that would be the economic effect.

(11,911.) [It would reduce the output ?]—It would reduce the output; it would reduce all labour.

(11,912.) [While the permanent charges remained the same ?]—The permanent charges remaining the same.

(11,913.) [Would the effect of that be so serious as to cause the closing of collieries in your district ?]—I am afraid it would. With the exception of the last two or three years, we have had hard work to live, and I have known many collieries that have been making nothing at all for some years.

(11,914.) [And you are afraid that in many cases, if such an enactment was passed, it would just make the difference between a colliery being kept open and being closed ?]—I have no doubt that many of them would be entirely closed.

(11,915.) [Especially in times of pressure ?]—In the ordinary times; take the first seven years of the last ten, I have no doubt it would have that effect.

(11,916.) [The collieries that would be closed would naturally be the weakest, those least favourably situated from the economic point of view ?]—Yes, that would be so; they would be closed first, and then the others would follow, may be.

(11,917.) [A similar effect, I presume, would follow from the enactment of an eight hours' day upon those miners who were less skilled or less strong than their fellows; the weakest would have to go to the wall ?]—Well, those who work by piece-work would not earn the same money.

(11,918.) [And the owners would also, I suppose, naturally prefer to retain in their employment the men who would produce the largest output ?]—Yes, they would naturally.

(11,919.) [There would be a kind of selection going on therefore in which the weaker men would constantly be

thrown out of employment ?]—Yes; we could not afford to pay them the money that we are paying them for a less amount of manual labour. But almost a more serious thing than that would be this. I believe it would be very greatly attended with more accidents; men would hurry—I am speaking from my own personal experience——

(11,920.) [I am coming to the question of accidents in a moment, if you do not mind. You think that the economic effect would be to close the collieries that were least favourably situated, and to deprive of work the men who had the least advantages of strength or skill ?]—Naturally; and the result of that would be a competition on their part in the labour market.

(11,922.) [I now ask you if you do not think that an eight hours' day might nevertheless be justified by considerations of the miners' health or of the miners' safety ?]—It would take a great deal to convince me that an hour more or less in the pit would prejudice the miner's health; that is my opinion.

(11,923.) [Your opinion is that the miner's health does not suffer by an additional hour a day ?]—Not in the least.

(11,924.) [Do you know whether there are any statistics existing that bear on this point ?]—No, I have not gone into that.

(11,925.) [You are not aware whether any such exist or not ?]—No, I have simply confined myself chiefly to the district and my practical knowledge of mining.

(11,926.) [Speaking as a practical man your impression is that if the hours of labour were reduced from nine or ten to eight it would not make any serious difference in the health of the miners ?]—No, not the slightest.

(11,927.) [And it is further your opinion that at the present time mining must be regarded as a healthy occupa-

tion compared with other occupations?]—Yes, certainly; I see nothing in it otherwise.

(11,928.) [Now with regard to accidents. If you were to reduce the hours of working in mines from nine to eight, what effect would that have upon the safety of the miners; would it reduce the number of accidents?]—I believe it would increase the number of accidents because a man would feel that he must do the work within a certain period and he would omit or neglect to do what is necessary for his own safety. Take this, for instance; the collier has to stand the timber posts, cogs, and so forth in the face of his working. The collier now fills possibly his last tram of coal, the last tram comes to him and he fills it just about the time of leaving off. While filling that tram he finds a slip running up in the roof. Slips are the great cause of accidents in our district. If he is bound to be on the top of the pit by a certain time he cannot stand that post; he cannot stand that timber; he cannot stand that cog to make his place safe for the next shift. Perhaps he will see the necessity of standing a post in the middle of filling his tram; he knows he has only a certain time to do it; he neglects standing that post; the result would be an accident, whereas now there is no obligation upon him to be out within a half an an hour or an hour of the end of the shift, and he does as a steady man and a good workman what is necessary, even at the cost of being in for an hour later than his fellow men.

MR. WILLIAM JENKINS (10th February, 1892.)

(12,074.) I am a Mining engineer of upwards of 30 years' standing, and indeed have been engaged in coal mining all my life.

(12,075.) I am now, and have been for about 21 years past, the general manager of the Ocean Collieries, and a director of the Ocean Company.

(12,076.) These collieries are situated partially in the Rhondda Valley on the South Wales Coalfield. They are steam coal collieries. They are also partially situated in the Ogmore Valley and in the Garw Valley, and also at Ynysybwl, adjoining the Aberdare Valley.

(12,077.) I have heard the evidence given by Mr. Jones and by Mr. Thomas.

(12,078.) And I think I agree with Mr. Jones' evidence throughout.

(12,085.) The day's work is nine hours generally at the pits throughout the district, or 54 hours, less two hours for meals, per week. Any time worked beyond 54 hours per week for any class of men connected with the pits is paid for extra.

(12,086-92.) What that really means, is this: that the pits are occupied in winding for that 54 hours continuously excepting 20 minutes in the middle of the day when they stop for meal time. That really applies to the people who are immediately connected with the pits. After a workman has reached the bottom of the shaft it may safely be assumed, if a collier, that he is on the average about three-quarters of a mile from his working place, and as a matter of practice after a workman has reached the bottom of the shaft it is necessary for him to be a little time between the bottom of the shaft and the lamp locking station, where he has his lamp examined and locked by an official, who is also in immediate charge of the district where he works, and who gives him any necessary directions before he proceeds to his work. The time thus occupied and the time occupied in walking to his working place cannot be accomplished on the average in less than half-an-hour. The working place reached, examined, the tools looked up, the victualling box put down together with the jacket, it is certainly on the

average a quarter to 8 before there is a stroke of work done in the face. Some of the earlier men may have reached their working place a quarter of an hour earlier. Work will then go on by the average man until 10 o'clock, when as a rule he will take 20 minutes for his lunch, then will work on again until 1 o'clock when at least 20 minutes to half-an-hour will be taken for his dinner. Again work will be resumed until about a quarter to 4, when if everything is all right in the face, work will cease, and the collier will be wending his way out. On the other hand, if there is anything special calling for his attention, as frequently happens, a piece of top requires ripping, a cog requires wedging, a pair of timber or some post requires standing, he sets about the performance of those requirements, which frequently necessitates his staying in the working place a quarter or half-an-hour, sometimes an hour after the regular time for ceasing work in his working place.

(12,093.) What he does in this way is paid by his tonnage upon the coal, by so much per yard, for the thickness that he rips for his ripping, and so much for the cogs. The setting of the posts is included in the cutting price of the coal.

(12,024.) And if he had done this work within the nine hours, he would have got less coal. What happens very frequently is this: that after he ceases work, and has filled up his last tram of coal, he finds that it is necessary for him to stand a post or possibly that the top may have taken to what we term "work," and he may possibly have to stand a pair of timber, for the safety of the place. This is substantially the daily practice of colliers who are employed at piece work, so much per ton for the coal, and so much per yard for the ripping. The actual time such a workman will be in the face of his place will average, say, from 7.45 until until 3.45, less three-quarters of an hour for meals, or, say $7\frac{1}{4}$ hours' work.

(12,096.) This working time of 7 or $7\frac{1}{4}$ hours is quite little enough for a man to give out his labour in a manner that shall earn to him a reasonable reward for his toil, and not in any manner to overstrain his energy or to deprive him of reasonable enjoyment of life. I am firmly of the conviction that any reduction of the working hours would be wholly impracticable in our collieries, and would result in the failure on the part of the workman to give out his labour to the best advantage. If he were hurried he would be doing an injustice to himself, by running unnecessary risks, and by the strain upon him physically the fatalities in the face would be increased. Eight hours from bank to bank would reduce this working time of $7\frac{1}{4}$ hours by, first of all, one hour, leaving $6\frac{1}{4}$ hours, and, again, by the mean time taken for men to descend and ascend; and assuming that it takes, as it does in our collieries, three-quarters of an hour to descend and ascend respectively, and taking the mean of the descending and ascending time at three-quarters of an hour, the $6\frac{1}{4}$ hours worked will be again reduced by three-quarters of an hour, or, say, to $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours as the maximum time that a mean time collier would be at his working face. This is on the assumption that the same time is taken for refreshment in both cases, which I think substantially would be the case.

(12,097.) [That is to say, that, in the calculations that you have made and placed before us, showing the time that a collier is now at the working face, you have not taken into account the time occupied in ascending and descending the shaft?] No; he is actually at the face for that $7\frac{1}{4}$ hours.

(12,101.) [I do not know whether I have correctly followed the last answer, that a reduction to eight hours from bank to bank would practically leave only $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours work in the face?] That is what I mean. That is excluding the time that is usually taken for meals.

(12,102.) [That is $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours' work?] Five and a-half hours' work. That is what I said.

(12,103.) [Of course, that is equivalent to saying, you know, that the time now from bank to bank is $9\frac{3}{4}$ hours?] Quite so.

(12,104) [You say that to reduce the time from bank to bank to eight hours would make a difference of an hour and three-quarters, hence, at present, it must be $9\frac{3}{4}$ from bank to bank?] Clearly so, the mean time now.

(12,106.) [Eight hours from bank to bank?]—No. These are eight hours shifts; that is, eight hours work, less half-an-hour for meals, or a net working time of $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours in the face of the work, relieving one another at the face, or, in case of shaft-sinking, at the bottom of the shaft. I think it would be impracticable for us to keep our collieries open with only working $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours on the coal and $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours on repairs out of the 24 hours, and if only such proposal is to be entertained, it can only result in either the closing of the collieries or a complete revolution in our system of working, the outcome of which I do not at present see through. At the present time, for every 100 colliers we have at work cutting coal and doing necessary repairs in the face of their own working places, we have employed 100 other men in hauling, hitching, labouring, ostlering, and officials engaged in repairing and keeping open the roads. These men, at present, work the same hours as the colliers, and if the proposal for reducing the number of hours of the colliers is carried out, which really means something like 24 per cent. reduction in their hours, the same will have to apply to the repairers and others; in other words, the repairers and others will have to be increased in number by 20 to 24 per cent. And this is further aggravated by the fact that the collier at present devotes some 35 to 40 per cent. of his energy in his working

place towards repairs and maintenance of his own working place open; and unless the collier can give out his energy under the altered state of things in 5½ hours to the same extent that he does now in 7¼ hours, which, in my opinion, is physically impossible, the colliery is bound to close, notwithstanding that the staff of repairers is increased by 20 to 24 per cent., or again increased in proportion to the failure of the collier to produce the same quantity of coal as he does now when working 7¼ hours. There is a limitation to the number of men that can be put on to work in repairing advantageously, or they become in one another's way. I should like to say that our thick seams of steam coal, and their sursurroundings, are totally different from any other seams of coal in this country that I know of, and that it is quite impracticable for a collier to leave his working place at any stated time day by day. This, I submit, is demonstrated by the fact, which I believe to be the fact, from my inspection of nearly every coalfield in the country, and that is, that we are obliged to use in our steam coal collieries about three times the quantity of pit wood for a given quantity of coal to what is used in any other district in the country.

(12,108.) For the collier to curtail his labour by the proposals made on his behalf would mean a reduction of the output from him by 20 to 24 per cent,; in other words, the quantity of coal upon which everybody is to be paid out of would be reduced by either one-fourth or one-fifth. Assuming a collier on the average at present sends out 2 tons of coals per day, he would only, under the altered state of things, send out 1½ tons or 1 ton 12 cwt. This quantity would have to bear all the charges now payable in respect of the 2 tons, or a consequent distributed increased charge.

(12,109.) The tonnage prices to the collier would be exactly the same. But in consequence of the disproportion

of the quantity—of the reduced quantity—of coal from the collier—all the other staff would be the same.

(12,117.) The present staff, outside the colliers, is only sufficient to keep the colliery in proper repair. If their time is to be reduced in the same manner as the colliers, it will be necessary to increase the number in proportion to the limitation of hours, especially as to timber-men and labourers. They would have to be increased to the full proportion of the reduction of hours, as there are now only sufficient to maintain the colliery in repair. Some of the other classes would not necessarily be increased. This is not all, nor anything like it. With a lapse of four hours between the shifts the falls would be nore numerous, the roof will be more friable, and more men will be injured, in my opinion, and a considerable number of the working places will daily be stopped by reason of falls.

(12,123.) Assuming that an eight hours day from bank to bank was established, and that the repairing shift went down at 7 o'clock in the evening, as they do now, then there would be an additional number of hours between the time of the hewer leaving his place, and the repairer going in to attend to the repairs.

(12,124.) Consequently that there will be a greater amount of work to be done by reason of falls of roof and crush, and those other things which you refer to.

(12,126.) I would also like to point out to the Commission that eight hours from bank to bank limits the winding power of the colliery by the time which is occupied in letting the men down and up, and which I have put at three-quarters-of-an-hour on each occasion. I wish to submit that it is not restriction in getting coal at the face which is necessary, but rather the very opposite—more coal from the face is required so as to enable the faces to advance quicker and safer. I

consider myself that one of our weaknesses in our system of coal mining in South Wales is the slowness at which our faces advance. Now, with reference to the double shifts, it has been suggested that we should have double shifts. I am not strongly in favour of double shifts, at the same time, I feel strongly the necessity of getting more coal from the faces in the interests of safety and economy, and, as a matter of opinion, some system of double shift would be of advantage. If we could only see that the colliers can really render their labour out in shorter hours, it is clearly to the interest of the colliery owners to afford every facility for so doing, on the ground of the economy and safety in getting the coal worked quicker from smaller areas.

(12,130.) [It is your conviction that a limitation of the hours must have the effect of reducing output ?] Yes; that is a limitation of the hours of the colliers.

(12,131.) [Now, I suppose that that would not necessarily involve a reduction in the tonnage rate paid to the miners, although it might affect the total wages that they are able to earn ?] It would not affect the tonnage rate at all, not even the yardage rate.

(12,132.) [But the permanent charges would remain the same, while the output would be diminished, and therefore the permanent charges would be heavier in proportion than they are now ?] They, of necessity, I think, would be in greater proportion, they certainly would remain the same, but I think they would be considerably increased necessarily.

(12,133.) [Do you think the permanent charges would actually be increased ?] That is my strong conviction.

(12,134.) We should have to employ a larger staff of people for the maintenance of our collieries and for the repairs.

(12,135.) [Now, what do the permanent charges principally consist of—the payment of wages to men other than the hewers?] Yes; the hewers are only 50 per cent. of the total number of men employed. Roughly, the gross wages earned by the hewers would possibly be about 10 per cent. larger in amount than the gross wages earned by all the other class of workmen employed at the colliery underground.

(12,136.) [And your permanent charges would include the wages paid to these other men?] Yes.

(12,137.) [Supposing the hours of the hewers were reduced, you would, at the same time, proportionately reduce the hours of these datal men, would you not?] I think it would follow as a matter of necessity.

(12,138.) [So far as they work underground, the proposal would be that their hours should be limited in the same way as the hours of the hewers?] That is what I understand the proposal to be.

(12,139.) [Would it be possible, under those circumstances, to reduce their wages?] I do not think so.

(12,140.) [The wages of the hewers themselves would be reduced if the output was reduced, because, assuming the tonnage rate to remain the same, they would receive payment for a less quantity?] Yes, because they would be paid by the quantity.

(12,141.) [Do you think it would be impossible to make a proportionate reduction in the wages of the datal men?] I think so. I do not think that they would take a reduction.

(12,142.) [You believe they would refuse to take a reduction?] I think so.

(12,143.) [Do you think the hewers would be prepared to

accept a reduction but on the total wages that they receive?] I do not know. Of course, I do not know exactly what the guiding principle is. I do not know that they really believe that they are going to have a reduction—possibly.

(12,144.) [Supposing the legal limitation to an eight hours day made it necessary either to close the collieries or to reduce the total amount received in wages by the men, you believe that that is a consequence which the men do not in the least foresee?] Yes.

(12,145.) [And that, if such a consequence came about, they might be willing to go back to the old system again?] I do not know. Of course, it would come that some other system would have to be devised, there is no doubt; there would be two parties to the arrangement afterwards.

(12,146.) [In short, your belief is that a legal eight hours day in your district would make the colliery industry practically impossible without a change of system?] That is my conviction.

(12,165.) [Now, putting aside for a moment the question of an eight hours from bank to bank, have you ever been approached, may I ask, by your workmen, with regard to shortening the working time by mutual arrangement?] No. I have not.

(12,166.) [You never have?] No, never.

(12,253.) [Can you give us an estimate of the extra cost per ton, say, at your own colleiries, of adopting the eight hours from bank to bank, compared with your present hours?] I am afraid I cannot, because the figures would be so extravagant.

(12,254.) [I would ask you to give an estimate at any rate, if you can?] First of all, you reduce your quantity;

it is only half the men that we work who are producing coal at all, and they only produce to about two-thirds of their time at the maximum. We have got to keep the whole of the other staff employed and paid for out of the reduced quantity.

(12,255.) [Did you hear Mr. Edward Jones' evidence yesterday?] Yes.

(12,256.) [He gave it as his experience at one of his collieries that the difference was 9d. per ton?] That was, I think, in respect to losing one turn a week, or one turn a month.

(12,257.) No, it was practically applying this number of hours to a colliery under his control, and it is on the notes that it made a difference of 9d. per ton in the cost of working. [Would you say that at your collieries it would be more or less than that?] I have no hesitation in saying that it would be very considerably more.

(12,258.) [And, in addition to that, would you say that the risk of accident would be increased or decreased?] In my opinion it would be increased.

Mr. GEORGE WILLIAM WILKINSON:—

(12,316.) I am a Mining engineer in the Monmouthshire district, and also in the Glamorganshire district.

(12,317.) Having charge of several collieries in Monmouthshire and Glamorganshire.

(12,324.) [Do you desire now to say anything as to the eight hours working day?]—Yes. I have gone carefully into the result of eight hours from bank to bank; it will really mean little more than about $7\frac{1}{4}$ hours' work in the face. This would have the effect of reducing the output in a large colliery to the extent of 150 tons a day, and would increase the cost 1s. per ton.

(12,325.) [What is that based upon?]—Upon actual figures.

(12,326.) [But is it based upon the contraction of hours from 9 to 8, or from 10, on certain days of the week, to 8?] —From the same hours now taking the hour each day.

(12,327.) [But are the collieries of which you are speaking collieries working 9 hours or working 10 hours?]—Ten hours during the long days. I will give you a little later on the exact times at which they ascend, the time taken in going to their working places, and the time employed there, and in returning.

(12,328.) [You are now speaking of a colliery which on Monday works seven and on Saturday works seven, and on the four intervening days works ten hours?]—That is so.

(12,329.) [And you are contrasting the present output and costs, and so on, under that system, with a system under which eight hours would be the limit; and are you assuming eight hours to be applied also to the Monday and Saturday in that case?]—Certainly, the same reduction. In proportion there would be a reduction.

(12,331.) [Therefore you are assuming that if you were obliged to reduce your hours on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday to eight, your hours on Monday and Saturday would also be eight?]—That is what I mean; it would not only have the effect of increasing the cost, but I believe it would, in very great measure, affect our roof. The coal face travelling so slowly would be very much more broken than it is at present; it would also have the effect of crushing the coal. You will have a larger percentage of small coal by the faces travelling slower; the men would also have very much less time to repair their working places and to secure them. These are all serious matters to be

considered. Mention has been made of the dangerous nature of our seams as compared with those in the North of England. I have had considerable experiences in the North, both in Durham, in Staffordshire, and in North Wales, and undoubtedly the South Wales collieries are very much more dangerous, the top is much more friable, the seams are thicker and more dangerous to work than they are in the other districts.

(12,359.) Your objection to shortening the hours of labour is, because you think it will advance the price of production? No, it is not only the cost of production, but I think it would render the colliery unsafe. The working places would not have that attention that they have now from the colliers.

(12,360.) What reason have you to think that? They will not have the time; they could not possibly do it.

(12,361.) Have you any reason for suspecting that the collier does not now give that attention which he ought to do just now? We are aware that he is giving every attention by our constantly examining the working places; he has time to do it now, whereas he would not have time to do it then, and to earn the money that he is getting now.

(12,362.) It is simply that you anticipate that that would be the case? I anticipate that that would be the case.

Mr. THOMAS GRAY:—

(12,390.) I am a Mining engineer, a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, and manager for Messrs. Vivian & Sons' Collieries, near Tynewydd.

(12,391.) I was also for some time an inspector of mines, acting as assistant to Mr. Thomas Wynne, in South Staffordshire.

(12,392-3.) I have heard the evidence that has been given by Mr. Jones, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Jenkins, and Mr. Wilkinson, and I concur generally with that evidence.

(12,398.) Have you anything to add to that which has been already laid before us by Mr. Wilkinson in regard to the effect of an eight hours limitation? I think not, except that I think the collieries of any size, say from 500 to 1,000 tons a day, would not be able to draw the quantity in the reduced number of hours.

(12,399.) May we take it that the views expressed upon this subject by Mr. Wilkinson are shared by you? They are shared by me.

Mr. J. KEIR HARDIE, President of the Ayrshire Miners' Union.

(12,449.) [Perhaps you can tell us to what extent in Ayrshire the system of limiting the work to five days per week, and eight hours per day, is enforced?]—There are only two districts, employing between 800 and 900 men, who have a weekly holiday. They observe every Saturday as a holiday. Over the remaining districts of Ayrshire, each workman takes a holiday during the course of the week, as it best suits his own convenience. The eight hours day is not at all general. We have one large colliery, where over 600 men are employed, where the eight hours day has been worked since the year 1873 without break; but over the remaining districts of Ayrshire the hours vary from seven per day to as high as 10 per day. There is no rule fixing a limit of a number of hours.

(12,459.) [Generally, what are the hours of the hewer or actual coal-getter in Ayrshire?]—There is no number of hours which would apply generally. It depends very much on circumstances and chance. The pits wind coal from 7 in the morning till 4 and half-past 4 in the afternoon, with a

dinner-time of from half-an-hour to an hour in some cases; where they drop work at 4 o'clock the dinner-hour is half-an-hour; where they go on till half-past 4, it is an hour. The miners, with the exception of one very large colliery, are free to leave the pits when they please, and if circumstances be favourable, a good workman may have his work over at the end of six hours, whilst other men in the pit, equally good workmen, but having to suffer under more unfavourable conditions, may be compelled to stay 10 hours in the pit to get a day's work.

(12,566.) [You are in favour of a legal limitation of the hours of labour to eight?]—Yes.

(12,567.) [Do you mean underground labour?]—Yes; now I am speaking for the Ayrshire miners, I mean for the underground workers. We have found by experience that it is not possible to have an eight hour day by voluntary effort. We have made repeated attempts to establish it, and these have always failed. The system of working in mines, in Ayrshire at least, lends itself to playing upon the credulity and the selfishness of a section of the workers, and these have always succeeded in winning them away from their allegiance to the eight hours day; and under those circumstances, we claim that the eight hours day should be enforced by law. If that were done, we know it would neither result in a diminution of the men's income, restriction of the output, nor an increase in the cost of production, but that these three, so far as Ayrshire is concerned, would remain the same as at present, the difference, if anything, being in favour of a lessened cost of production.

(12,568.) [Do you mean that the limitation of a number of hours to eight would not lead to any limitation of the number of hours per week?]—No; but that it would not lead to any limitation of the number of tons produced.

(12,569.) [I wanted to know whether that result was to be attained by the same number of hours per week really being worked under an eight hours day limitation, or whether it was to be obtained in some other way?]—Partly by the same number of hours being worked and partly by the same number of tons being produced in the eight hours as is now produced in the greater number of hours.

(12,570.) [You do not say that you think that the output would not be reduced, because they are at present, in fact, not working more than 48 hours a week?]—The produce is not equal to 48 hours' produce in the course of the week.

(12,571.) [I am only anxious to draw out your views clearly?]—The pits may in some cases be nominally working 60 hours per week, but the output even from those pits does not exceed what could be produced without much extra cost in the way of production in 48 hours. The system of haulage, and so on, is so loose that a very little improvement there would mean a great improvement in the output, and the output is determined by the demand of coal, and the demand has never exceeded—never come up to, during my residence in Ayrshire the past 12 years—what could be supplied in an eight hours day.

(12,572.) [Then your view, speaking for Ayrshire, is that a better system of getting the work out and getting it away might enable the same output from the same number of men to be got as at present, although no man was down the pit more than eight hours?—*Would* enable.]

(11th February, 1892):—

(12,776.) [Going back to the question of limitation of work either by restriction or otherwise—from your experience before you took to journalism—would you be of opinion that

restriction and shortening of hours and working fewer days in the week would have any effect upon the cost of producing the coal?]—Not unless it was carried to excess. When we speak of restriction we mean regulation, limiting the output to the requirements of the trade, and not raising coal for which there is no demand.

(12,777.) [Then do you suggest that the men are to be the judges as to the requirements of the trade or the people who invest their capital in the collieries?]—The men, certainly.

(12,778.) [Would you consider that the experience of the men, and their occupation, entitles them to be better judges than these people who invest their capital, and who are under covenants to work their properties, and also to carry on their colliery subject to the Mines Regulation Act?]—The men are concerned in securing a wage for their work, and as soon as trade begins to affect their wage they have a fair indication that something is wrong, and they are entitled to take measures to protect their wages, and regulation can be proved to have protected their wages in the past.

(12,872.) [Then in suggesting the adoption of the eight hours, would you agree that the men should in any event work 48 hours per week?]—No.

(12,873.) [Then the obligation would be upon the owner to keep the colliery open that the men should only work eight hours per shift, but that they should decide as to what number of shifts they would work in the week; is that it?]—Yes.

(12,874.) [Do you not think that that would be a very serious additional expense upon the production of the coal?]—No.

(12,785.) [But perhaps you have never had to do with the working out of the cost of producing coal, have you?]—No, I never was a mine owner.

(12,876.) [And, therefore, you are saying without knowing anything as to what goes to make the cost of producing coal?]—I am speaking as a man with a practical knowledge of mining in all its phases, and knowing what does tend and what does not tend to increase the cost of production, and the eight hours day, so far as Scotland is concerned, would not add to the cost of production.

(12,877.) [That is your opinion, and I will take it.]—You have never had any experience in the making up of cost sheets at any collieries, have you?]—No.

(12,901.) That is just what I was going to ask you what it really meant. I am much obliged to you. I think you also said that if the Eight Hours Act came to pass, the output would not be lessened. I did not quite follow your reason for that, but I gathered it to be this, that you thought the working would be more regular, is that so? That is so.

(12,902.) [Then supposing a district in which full time is now being worked, and more than eight hours, would it or not increase, or would it decrease the output in such a district as I have named?] Unless the machinery could be correspondingly improved, it would decrease the output.

(12,903.) [Then assuming that they are collieries which are up to modern requirements, and are well equipped with machinery, and of the best fashion, it would decrease the output?]—Yes.

(13,053-4.) I believe, as a whole, that an eight hours' day would have the effect of diminishing the output.

(13,056-7.) [Would it not, then, increase the cost of production?]—The cost of production would be increased in some districts, in others it would not. When the cost of production would be increased employers in those districts at present

have an unfair advantage over the others where the cost would not be increased.

(13,058.) [Are they by means of that advantage gaining greater profits and paying relatively smaller wages to their workmen ?]—Both; as a matter of fact, where the hours worked are longest wages are smallest, and in many instances the profits are higher.

(13,059.) [But do you mean to tell me that at the present time in the Ayrshire coalfield profits are higher than they are in the other coalfields ?]—I am certain that in Ayrshire the profits are higher than they are, for example, in Cumberland, where the eight hours' day is in force, or in any other short-hour districts.

(13,085.) [I will not pursue the question further but only ask this: if it could be proved that the mining industry in any particular district would be seriously prejudiced by the establishment of an eight hours' day, so seriously prejudiced that many of the collieries in that district would have to be closed, would you, nevertheless, insist upon and press for a legal eight hours' day ?]—No.

(13,086.) [You would not ?]—No.

(13,087.) [If it could be shown that the economical result of it would be disastrous in certain districts, you would abandon your advocacy of an eight hours' bill ?]—I should meet the case in the way in which similar difficulties are met under the Coal Mines Regulation Act. There are certain clauses of that Act from which exemption can be obtained on application to the Home Secretary; and if it could be shown, and the miners in any given district declared by a majority of their members that the operation of the Act would injure them and their trade, I would give them power to obtain exemption from the Eight Hours' Act so long as it was that way.

(13,088.) [I see; this is rather an important modification of the proposal for a universal eight hours. I gather from you now that you abandon the suggestion that there should be an Eight Hours' Bill universally applicable to all the mining districts in the country, and would leave it to the miners in each district to determine whether a Bill should or should not apply to them?]—I have always done so. The resolution which I had the honour to propose, and which was agreed to at the Trades Union Congress at Newcastle, recognised that principle, that where a majority of the workers in a trade—I did not say a district—desires exemption from the operation of the Eight Hours' Bill they should thereby be exempt.

(13,089.) In the case of the miners, not that I believe that any disastrous results such as are anticipated would follow, but in order to obtain our Eight Hours' Bill for the benefit of those districts which at present work unduly long hours, I would be prepared seriously to consider a proposal of that kind.

(13,201.) [You are rather in favour of some option on the part of the workman; and you at the Trades Union Congress moved a resolution in favour of allowing trades to contract out of the Act, as we may call it, or to appeal to be exempted from the operation of the Act; that is so, is it not?]—I took that line, not because I was in favour of it, but with the object of securing a common ground which those who, whilst not opposing the principle of a legal eight hours' day, were afraid it might be injurious to their trade (being imposed upon them from the outside) would accept as a compromise on the eight hours' question.

(13,205.) [Now, suppose you have a body of men who are fairly well organised and who have, after considering the subject very fully, have come to the conclusion that an

Eight Hours' Bill would be very injurious to them, would you enforce an Act of the kind upon them, regardless of their wishes and opinions ?]—I would not.

(13,402.) [You advocate the eight hours' day for all trades ?]—All trades and occupations.

(13,403.) [Do you advocate that in the interests of the working men ?]—Yes.

(13,404.) [How would that improve their position ?]—By giving them more leisure—more time for recreation—more time for reading—for improving themselves.

(13405.) [You do not anticipate that it would increase their wages ?]—Ultimately I believe it would. I believe wages to be determined by the standard of living. If you improve the condition of the men you make a higher wage necessary.

(13,406.) [Assume for a moment that the population increased so fast (as it probably would do under those circumstances of perfect comfort and happiness), that there were more men than could be employed eight hours a day, what would you do then ? Would you reduce the hours to six ?]—Certainly.

(13,407.) [And if the limit of six was found to be too long, would you reduce it to four ?]—If necessary, yes.

Mr. ROBERT BAIRD.

(13,416.) I am managing director and agent for the Dechmont Colliery Company, Limited.

(13,417.) Am also secretary and treasurer for the Lanarkshire Coal Masters' Association.

(13,463.) Our Association hold the opinion very strongly that a legal eight hours' day would be very detrimental to the interests not only of the miners but of the country.

(13,465.) We hold that the limitation of the miners' work to eight hours from bank to bank would very largely increase the cost of production, that it would very sensibly do so. We had some experience of that in the year 1886, when the miners voluntarily restricted their output to 2s. 6d. a day and it had the result of raising our cost very much. We have no doubt whatever that were such a day enforced upon us it would add to the cost of coal very materially.

(13,466.) [Taking your corrected answer to the question at the top of page 3, "Miners and underground workers as a "rule average nine and a half to ten hours from bank to bank," the limitation to eight hours would therefore, of course, produce a reduction of one and a half to two hours?] —Just so. We account it a great hardship and a great grievance that the miners should abstain from working one day a week, that the pit should remain idle this one day when all our fixed charges are running on.

(13,467.) [You do not mean that the pit is drawing coals or attempting to draw coals on that day?]—No, the pit is idle so far as drawing is concerned.

(13,468.) [You mean that the standing charges, clerks, managers, and rates and taxes, and so on?]—Yes, and tradesmen.

(13,579.) [You stated your opinion that a reduction of the hours of labour would increase the cost of production?] Yes.

(13,580.) [And lead to an increase in the price of coal?] That would follow, I expect, as a matter of course.

(13,581.) [Have you any reason to doubt whether the increased price of coal might not compensate you for the increased cost of production?] At the moment it would,

but we think if coals were unduly raised in price it would injure other trades in the country, and then it would come back upon ourselves in a diminished demand.

(13,582.) [The men, of course, who defend it hold a different opinion?] That has been stated so here.

(13,583.) [They think that the price of coal would be maintained?] So I heard. I heard the previous witness say he thought that the price of coal would be maintained, and perhaps increased, but that is a matter of opinion, and I do not think it.

(13,584.) [If it were made general, and every coalowner were put in the same position, still you would apprehend an ultimate reduction in price?] Of course, we have to take into account the foreign competition. We send a great deal of coal out of the country to Germany, France, and other places. If the cost of coal were unduly raised in this country, it would affect the export of coal, and consequently the price.

(13,585.) [Perhaps you will state what, in the opinion of members of your Association, would be the effect of cost of production and prices of the reduction of the hours of labour?] I cannot speak for the Association as an Association, because the matter has not been discussed by us, but I know that individual coalmasters think, and that is my own opinion, that that would be the effect of a limitation of the day's work.

(13,586.) [State what you think would be the effect?] I think that, while at the beginning it might have the effect of raising the price of coal, ultimately a reaction would set in, and our latter state would be as bad, if not worse, than the first, because there are a great many industries dependent upon the coal supply, and if the price of coal were

raised to them above a certain figure, then they might not be able to carry on their work, and would have to close or limit their work in some way. We know that during recent years the price of coal has been considerably above the average, and that some trades have been injured thereby.

(13,587.) [Then you apprehend that the demand would be reduced?] That would follow if the consumption is reduced.

(13,588.) [The consumption would be reduced, the cost of production would remain enhanced, and the price would again fall?] I think so.

Mr. ANDREW KIRKWOOD McCOSH:—

(13,613.) I am Vice-President of the Lanarkshire Coal Masters' Association, and a coalmaster in Lanarkshire.

(13,615-6.) I have heard the evidence just given by Mr. Baird, and I generally agree with that evidence.

(13,650.) [Do you desire simply to confirm the statement made by Mr. Baird as to the effect of an eight hours' limitation?] Yes; I believe it would increase the cost of production very considerably.

(13,670.) [Are we to gather from that last observation that in your opinion the men in asking for an eight hours day have in view rather a diminution of output than a diminution of hours?] That is my opinion. I do not think there is any feeling in favour of an eight hours day on the score of health or for increased leisure. There may be a little feeling in favour of it simply arising from an idea that wages will be increased by limitation of output.

(13,671.) [You think that is their real object?] Yes.

(13,672.) [And they put forward these humanitarian motives, you think, as a cloak to their real views?] I think

the argument of health is not being put forward now because when it is inquired into it is found that miners are one of the healthiest classes of the community. I think that will be proved by statistics everywhere when inquired into. Certainly it has proved so in our experience. I have an instance that came under my own observation.

(13,674.) [I asked you first whether you thought that the object of the demand for an eight hours day was a diminished output or a reduction in the hours, and you said the real object was a diminished output? Now, I ask you, do you think that the statements that out of the men a diminishod output would not be the result of an eight hours' day are insincere?] I should prefer to put it in this way, that I believe it is a desire for increased wages. The men have an indefinite idea that by these means their wages will be increased. That is the real feeling.

(13,676.) [Therefore I ask you again, do you go the length of saying that, in your view, the statement that the output would not be diminished by an eight hours day is an insincere statement?] I think so?

Mr. JOHN CONNEL.

(13,734.) I am Honorary Secretary of the Fife and Clackmannan Coal Owners' Association, and Managing Director of the Lochgelly Iron and Coal Company, Ltd.

(13,738.) The present working hours for underground men are $8\frac{1}{2}$ from bank to bank.

(13,739.) Those hours have been in operation for fully 20 years.

(13,740.) Eight and a half hours from bank to bank. That includes all classes of underground men.

(13,741.) [Not only the hewer but the men who get the

work away ?]—Quite so, the hewers and the brushers and so on. Of course that does not represent the number of hours at the face; they will not be more than 7½ at the face. There is half an hour for breakfast, and the travelling time to come off the 8½ hours.

(13,742.) [The difference between the 7½ and the 8½ would be represented as to about half an hour by meal time, and as to the other half hour by going down the shaft and going to the working place, and reversing the operation ?]—That is so, that is about an hour.

(13,748.) Of course we have seen the desire for the legalised time of eight hours, which would inflict greater cost upon us even, than we have just now. We have suffered very much indeed relatively with other districts in being restricted to the 8½ hours from bank to bank, but if a legalised time of eight hours were made we would then be worse off even than we are as to costs. We have shown to our miners, time after time, in conference with them, the hardship that we suffer in comparison with other districts. We compete with the West of Scotland in the same markets for our coal—the shipping markets—and they have all the additional time to work, and of course the costs are all the same with us against the longer time that they work.

(13,750.) The effect would undoubtedly be that the costs of raising coal would be increased (that is our experience) by the shortening of time. I do not know that it would affect prices to any material extent, because I suppose that prices would be regulated in the future as they have been in the past, by supply and demand. It would certainly affect the profits or losses of the coalowner; if he could not raise his coal at a certain price, he must endeavour to get a price to pay him from the public. If the public refuse to pay him that price, of course the loss will be to him, and I fear that if prices were abnormally increased it might affect the

industries of the country, and thereby affect the coalowners in restricting the consumption of coal, and thereby lessening their profits or increasing their losses, but I cannot very well see that it would regulate prices in any way, because, of course, prices would be regulated according to the demand of the country.

(13,806.) What I mean is this. Our costs have been very much increased from the reduction of the ten hours day to eight hours, and if a further reduction of time is made it would necessarily increase the cost. If the thing was universal, then we would be on a level with our neighbours in competition.

(13,807.) [If there were an Act of Parliament passed for the United Kingdom, it would be universal?]—Quite so; we would be all on the same level then.

(13,808.) [Then, relatively, what would improve rather than injure your opportunity of competing with other districts?]—That is so. If it was general all over the country, it would put us in a better position; that is what we complain of at the present time—that we are unequally matched.

(13,883.) [Do you consider that the necessities of health require a reduction in the hours of labour?]—No, I do not.

(13,884.) [Or safety?]—No, I do not.

(13,888.) [Do you think it is desirable (having given the answer that you have as to health and safety) that there should be an Act of Parliament to prevent a man compulsorily from working more than eight hours?]—I cannot see it.

EXTRACT FROM MEMORANDUM AS TO MINING AND IRON INDUSTRIES.

Submitted to Group "A" Committee, 9th August, 1892.

B.—Hours of Labour in Mines.

25. Recent official returns enable a comparison to be made not only of the hours of labour, as between different mining districts in the United Kingdom, but also as between different countries engaged in this branch of industry. Manifestly in considering the wages paid, the hours of labour must be taken into account, and the economic circumstances of the workers generally, before the actual comparative conditions can be ascertained.

26. Great Britain.—There appear to be only two principal coal-mining districts in the United Kingdom where the hewers at present work more than eight hours per day, namely, Nottinghamshire and Monmouthshire, and even in these districts the hours are about eight at the face, as will be seen from the following statements, collated from Mr. Provand's return ;—

Under-Ground Labour.

Table I.—*Statement showing the Average Number of Hours per Day from Bank to Bank, and at the Face, in the Principal Coal-Mining Centres of the United Kingdom in* 1890 (*Hewers only*).

District.	Hours from Bank to Bank.	Hours at the Face.	Days per week at Face.	Hours per week at Face.
East Scotland (Lanark) -	9·28	7·88	5·5	43·34
West Scotland (Ayrshire) -	9·26	7·55	5·2	39·26
Northumberland - - -	7·08	6·07	5·26	31·92
Durham - - - -	7·21	5·87	5·60	32·87
Yorkshire - - - -	8·8	7·5	5·0	37·50
North and East Lancashire -	9·25	8·0	5·17	41·36
West Lancashire - -	9·32	7·86	4·83	37·96
Derbyshire - - - -	9·28	7·88	5·11	40·26
Notts - - - - -	9·6	8·23	4·93	40·57
North Staffordshire - -	8·95	7·63	5·22	39·82
South Staffordshire - -	7·82	7·32	5·23	38·28
Monmouthshire - - -	9·22	8·01	5·61	44·93
Glamorganshire - - -	9·13	7·66	5·7	43·66

SURFACE LABOUR.

TABLE K.—*Statement showing Number of Hours worked per Day and per Week in Different Districts in* 1890.

District.	Hours per Day exclusive of Meal-Times.	Average Days per Week.	Total Hours per Week.
East Scotland (Lanark) - -	9·05	6·0	54·30
West Scotland (Ayrshire) - -	8·75	5·95	52·06
Northumberland - - - -	9·34	5·60	52·30
Durham - - - - -	9·43	5·84	55·07
Yorkshire - - - - -	9·00	5·2	45·18
North and East Lancashire - -	9·25	5·5	50·87
West Lancashire - - - -	9·41	5·34	50·24
Derbyshire - - - - -	8·70	5·25	45·67
Notts - - - - - -	8·57	5·05	43·27
North Staffordshire - - -	8·57	5·86	50·22
South Staffordshire - - -	8·75	5·23	45·76
Monmouthshire - - - -	9·34	5·83	54·45
Glamorganshire - - - -	9·03	5·7	51·47

27. The two foregoing tables show (1) that the hours of under-ground labour and the average number of days worked are considerably less than those of surface labour, and (2) that in general the average week's work is less than 48 hours for under-ground labour, and not much over that limit for above-ground labour.

28. The hours of labour in mines have been greatly shortened within recent years, not in Great Britain alone, but throughout mining countries generally. Some descriptions of labour, however, have had their hours reduced much more than others. In the Northumberland coalfield, for example, the average hours of miners between 1850 and 1890 appear to have been reduced from 60 to 38, and much the same movement has taken place in the adjoining Durham district. In Derbyshire the hours of miners generally have been reduced, within the same interval, by 14½ hours per week, in the Wigan district by 6 to 12 hours, in South Staffordshire by 12 hours, in the Burnley district by 20 hours, in the Normanton district by 18 hours, and so with other districts. The following return of the hours of work in mines in 1850, and the reduction of hours between that year and 1890, is abstracted

from the Parliamentary return ordered on Mr. Broadhurst's motion (375 of 1890).

TABLE L.—*Hours of Work per Week in Coal-Mines in* 1850 *and the Reduction of Hours in* 1890 *on that Year.*

District	1850.	Decrease on 1850 in 1890.
	Hours.	Hours.
Northumberland—		
Hewers (Newcastle)	66*	22
Shifters	48*	1
Boys	72*	6 to 12
Durham—		
Deputy oversmen	48†	None
Mechanics	66½†	13½
Labourers	54†	No change
Lancashire—		
Miners generally (Wigan)	7-†	14½
Under-ground men (Bolton)	54*	4
Miners (Burnley)	56*	20
Other workmen	64*	8
Hewers (Clifton)	50*	6
Surfacemen (Clifton)	61*	6
Miners generally (Wigan)	60 to 66*	6 to 12
Derbyshire—		
Miners generally	66*	14½
Staffordshire—		
Miners generally (Burslem)	59	11
Yorkshire—		
Miners generally (Barnsley)	60*	18
,, ,, (Normanton)	60 to 66	18
South Wales—		
Miners generally (Aberdare)	58 to 72	4 to 18
Scotland—		
Miners generally (Fife)	60†	16

29. Mr. Broadhurst's return gives the hours of labour worked in 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, and 1890, for a large number of leading industries, taken sometimes from employers and sometimes

* Employer's Return. † Trade Union Return.

from trade-union sources. Explanatory and qualifying marginal remarks are introduced, which throw needed light on the figures, in a certain number of cases, but even so they are often ambiguous and doubtful. It would be well if in giving miners' wages, the average number of hours at the face were in all cases taken as the standard; but in some cases the hours evidently comprise the time from bank to bank, which adds from one to two hours per day to the stated time of labour. In other cases, again, the hours of labour vary as between summer and winter, the shorter hours generally prevailing in the former season. Meal-times introduce another disturbing element, which is not always made sufficiently clear, and when the hours of "colliers" are spoken of it is not evident whether this generic term is intended to apply to hewers alone, whether it is meant to include other labour underground, or whether it does not cover all labour at and about a colliery. All these points, which cannot be adequately cleared up from the return, must be considered in handling the figures.

30. It appears to be difficult to secure really trustworthy comparisons of the hours of labour worked in mines in different districts, and the difficulty is increased when any attempt is made to compare the hours worked at one period with the hours worked at another. However carefully questions may be framed with a view to avoid all possible sources of error, it will almost inevitably happen that those who furnish the answers will, without any conscious intention to mislead, and even with every desire to state the facts in the most accurate way, supply figures that do not mean quite the same thing when brought to the test of critical examination. Thus, for example, in filling up the returns of the hours of labour already cited, many districts give the hours for "miners generally," and it is impossible to say, on the face of the figures, whether the hours of hewers, labourers, and other employees, are averaged, or whether it is meant to convey the idea that all employees alike work the same number of hours, or whether the "miners generally" include only underground labour, or whether the hours of hewers are taken as at the face or from bank to bank; and if these qualifying conditions were uniform and understood as for one period, it is not always possible to say if the same conditions are taken for another.

31. There are very considerable differences to record, in other countries besides our own, as between one district and another, so that it is practically impossible to give an average that would be fairly representative of the country as a whole. But there appears to be every reason to believe that the average hours of miners are as short in Great Britain as in any other country, and shorter than in most others. If the average is taken in this

country at 9 hours per day from bank to bank it will not be far wide of the mark. In the United States it varies from $9\frac{1}{2}$ to 10 hours per day, and in France, Germany, and Belgium it is $9\frac{1}{2}$ to 11 hours per day, except in Dortmund and Saarbruck, where the average is shorter.

32. GERMANY.—A recent statistical statement, compiled and published by the Prussian Government, shows that in 1890 the hours of mining labour in the different mining districts varied as under :—

TABLE M.—*Statement Showing the Average Duration of the Day's Labour or "Shift" for Miners in Germany.*

Localities.	Hours per Day.
Upper Silesia	12 for 51 per cent. of workers. 10 „ 38 „ „ 8 „ 11 „ „
Lower Silesia	10 „ 88 „ „ 8 „ 11 „ „
Dortmund	8 „ practically the whole.
Saarbruck	8 „ „ „
Aix-le-Chapelle	9·6 „ average.
Brown coal mines	11·3 „ „
Hartz metal mines	10·3 „ „
Rhine metal mines	8·6 to 9·2
Salt mines	8·4 for average.

33. BELGIUM.—Belgium compares unfavourably with the record for Germany. A recent official census showed that the hours of labour in Belgian coal mines were :—

For 1,650, less than 9 hours.
„ 62,507, 9 to 11 hours,
„ 30,477, 11 to 12 hours.
„ 115, over 12 hours.

while as regards labour in metallurgic establishments the record was :—

For 508, less than 9 hours.
„ 3,976, 9 to 11 hours.
„ 10,136, 11 to 12 hours.

so that probably it would be fair to place the average day's labour in Belgium at $10\frac{1}{2}$ to 11 hours.

34. FRANCE.—The following data as to the miners in the

coalfields of France are abstracted from the latest official report on the subject.*

TABLE N.

	Hour.	Minutes.
Under-ground workers—		
Average hours per day underground for coal-miners - - - - - -	9	45
Average hours per day's work at the face (*travail effectif*) - - - - - -	8	13
Above-ground workers—		
Average hours per day on the ground -	10	46
Average hours per day's actual work (*travail effectif*) - - - - - -	9	39
	Days	
Average number of days worked in 1889	290	

35. In the iron mines of France there were employed in 1889, 3,440 hands under ground, and 872 above ground. They worked on an average 268 days during the year, their average hours being as under :—

	Hours.	Minutes.
Under-ground—		
In the mine - - - - - -	9	51
At the face - - - - - -	8	55
Above-ground—		
About surface - - - - - -	10	56
Effective labour - - - -	10	0

UNITED STATES.—A recent report of the Bureau of Labour Statistic in Illinois gave the average hours of coal miners as nine in winter, and nine and a half in summer, the average being 9·25.

* *Bulletin du Ministère des Travaux Publics*, June 1891, *p.* 162.

APPENDIX B.

[56 VICT.] *Mines (Eight Hours) Bill*, 1892.

A

BILL

TO

Restrict the Hours in Mines to Eight Hours per Day. A.D. 1893.

WHEREAS it is expedient to limit the hours of work underground of persons employed in mines:

Be it therefore enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1. This Act may be cited as the Miners (Hours of Work) Act, 1893. Short title.

2. A person shall not, in any one day of twenty-four hours, be employed underground in any mine for a period exceeding *eight hours* from the time of his leaving the surface of the ground to the time of his ascent thereto, except in case of accident. Limit of eight hours underground.

3. Any employer, or the agent of any employer, employing or permitting to be employed any person in contravention of this enactment, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding *forty shillings* for each offence, to be recovered in the same manner in which any penalty under the Acts relating to factories and workshops is recoverable. Penalty for contravention

UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA
AT
LOS ANGELES
LIBRARY

LONDON:

E. E. MILLER, PARLIAMENTARY PRINTER,
52, LONG ACRE, W.C.

3 396 8 1

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

Form L9–25*m*-9,'47(A5618)444

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT
LOS ANGELES
LIBRARY

TN
242
G7A5
1893
Gt. Brit.
Royal commission on labour-
Mines bill,
1893.

TN
242
G7A5
1893